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ABSTRACT

THIS PAMPHLET IS DESIGNED FOR ADULTS WHO HAVE ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH THAT MAY CREATE A NEED FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF SEX EDUCATION. CHAPTER ONE DISCUSSES THE NATURE OF SEX EDUCATION, INCLUDING ATTITUDES, LOVE, AND SEX EDUCATION IN PRESENT TIMES. CHAPTER TWO DISCUSSES ASSETS OF THE ADULT SEX EDUCATION: (1) LEARNING FROM ONE'S OWN EXPERIENCE; (2) KNOWING WHY ONE FEELS THE WAY HE DOES ABOUT SEX; (3) GETTING ALONG WITH THE YOUNGER GENERATION; (4) SETTING AN EXAMPLE; (5) KNOWING BASIC FACTS ABOUT SEX; AND (6) TALKING ABOUT SEX. THE NEXT CHAPTER GIVES BASIC INFORMATION: (1) THE HUMAN PLAN FOR REPRODUCTION, (2) THE MALE AND FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM, AND (3) CONCEPTION, PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT, AND BIRTH. CHAPTER FOUR DISCUSSES THE STAGES OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT: (1) INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD, (2) FROM NINE TO TWELVE YEARS, (3) FROM THE YEARS TWELVE TO FIFTEEN, AND (4) OLDER YOUTH. SOME WAYS OF LEARNING ABOUT SEX ARE GIVEN IN THE FINAL CHAPTER. THESE INCLUDE KEEPING LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN, AND LEARNING THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES OF DAILY LIFE. SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND YOUTH AGENCIES ARE ALSO GIVEN. (KJ)

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Prepared for the Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education of the National Education Association and the American Medical Association

by
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This series of pamphlets is prepared to help parents and those other adults who may have responsibility and concern in assisting children to form sound ideas and attitudes about family living, including sex education.

The Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education of the National Education Association and the American Medical Association publishes this series. We believe the home is the ideal place for sex education of children and youth. It is also recognized that many parents consider it desirable for the church, the school, or other responsible groups in the community to supplement this education. Thus, the ways in which this series is used will of necessity be dependent upon the judgment of individual parents and of local community groups. This focus of responsibility must be honored and these booklets must in no instance be used without full approval and joint planning from home, school and community.

SEX EDUCATION SERIES

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY, for parents of young children of preschool and early school age.

A STORY ABOUT YOU, for children in grades 4, 5, and 6.

FINDING YOURSELF, for boys and girls of approximately junior high school age.

APPROACHING ADULTHOOD, for young people of both sexes (about 16 to 20 years of age).

FACTS AREN'T ENOUGH, for adults who have any responsibility for children or youth that may create a need for an understanding of sex education.

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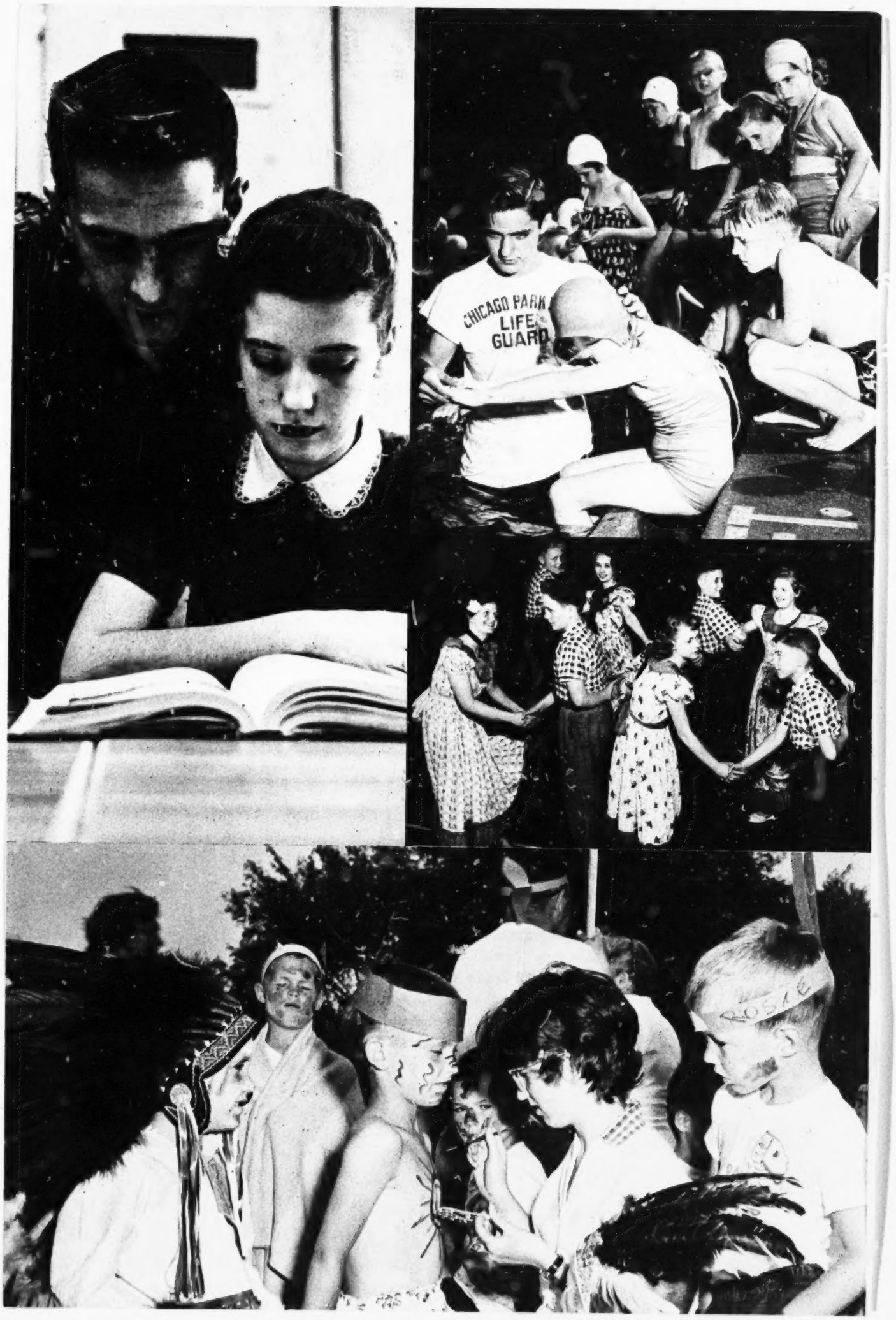

CHICAGO PARK
LIFE
GUARD

Chapter 1

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SEX EDUCATION?

Young Mr. and Mrs. Foster, their five-year-old son, Billy, and two guests, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, were viewing a television program about the exciting life of the Wilson family.

After the program, Billy turned to his father. "What happened, Daddy? The woman was just in bed, and now they have a baby?"

Mrs. Foster later told her family physician about the incident. "It worries me a little," she confessed. "Mr. and Mrs. Simpson laughed so loud that Billy was embarrassed and started to cry. His father tried to change the subject and hurried him off to bed. He didn't stop crying until after his bedtime story. I knew I had put off telling him where babies come from, so the next day I said, 'Billy, would you like to know the story about how the baby came to the Wilson family?' And he said, 'No, I don't like that story. People laugh at you.' So now what do I do, Doctor?"

Attitudes are Catching

This incident illustrates several useful points about sex education. The attitudes of parents and other adults in contact with children are catching. Whether grown people look upon sex as a great creative force in life, or something to be hushed up, or regard it chiefly as the topic of dubious jokes, the children in their care are likely to reflect the adult point of view. This sharing of attitudes and feelings is fully as important in sex education as the sharing of information. Consequently, adults need to be alive to their own feelings about sex as they guide the children and youth for whom they are responsible.

By talking naturally with Billy about the expected birth of a baby in a neighboring family a few weeks after the above incident, Mr. and Mrs. Foster were able to overcome his fear that he would be laughed at if he again asked questions about babies. They realized, as their physician had pointed out, that it was more im-

portant for Billy to feel free to ask questions than to give him the facts about birth when he did not want to hear them.

Sex education clearly involves much more than telling the facts of life. Some authorities believe that sex education is only as good as the attitudes it develops in children and youth about family life, marriage, babies, their own bodies, the way love is expressed, and members of the other sex. Sound attitudes in such matters encourage sex conduct that brings the rewards of self-respect, the likelihood of mutual happiness in marriage, and healthy family life.

Emphasis on attitudes does not minimize the value of useful information about sex, but it does suggest that the circumstances of learning the facts are of great importance. The story of the passing of life from one generation to the next is full of wonder and beauty. When the facts are told with dignity, they may go far in themselves toward creating sound attitudes and feelings about sex.

The home is the ideal place for telling the story of life, for parents have a continuing relationship with their children on this subject, over many years, in developing attitudes, as well as in sharing information. They are the ones who care most about their children, and who provide a buffer against the outside world. In many homes, the parents do provide excellent guidance in the sex education of their children. Other parents have the desire to give such guidance, but seem unable to do so, and these parents say that they need the help of the school, the church, or the community.

In one such case, the parents, the school principal, and the teacher of the children in a certain fifth grade were troubled by an unwholesome undercurrent of sex talk in that group. Boys made improper remarks about girls; girls gathered in little groups for whispered, furtive conversations. In this school, the parents had requested annually for several years that a film, "Human Growth," on human growth and reproduction, be shown to the sixth grade. After careful preparation on the part of teachers, parents, and children, this had been done with good results, as described on pages 40-42. The parents and teachers now agreed to try showing this film to the fifth grade children.

One mother said afterwards, "The picture proved to be what they needed, and all the dirty talk stopped. One little boy even came to the teacher and thanked her for giving him the chance to find out many things that he had wanted to know and couldn't talk to his folks about. This boy had been one of the leaders in stirring up trouble."

Attitudes about sex are likely to be more deep-rooted and lasting than young Billy Foster's fear of being laughed at. Feelings and attitudes that are significant in the child's sexual development begin to form very early in life, almost at birth. The child's parents and his home environment influence such attitudes first of all; playmates, the life of the neighborhood, and school and community exert their influence as he grows older. These attitudes may last over many years and may affect the individual's own approach to love, marriage and his ideas of family life.

Love is Basic

Parents and other adults who are seeking a sound approach to sex education need to know that there is no one approach or method that is always right for all children. Yet there is a basic core of sex education. It is the continued, reassuring love or friendship that parents, teachers, and youth leaders give to the children and youth under their guidance.

The love of a husband and wife for each other and for their children is the very essence of good sex education. In a home where such love is abundant, the baby or young child soon takes the first steps toward being able to give love in return. First loving his mother and father and other members of the family, he later learns to love playmates, teachers, special friends and finally is ready for the love that leads to marriage and parenthood. But if the baby or young child is not loved, it will be difficult for him to learn to give love.

Affection is indicated to the very young baby by the way it is held and cuddled, or by the facial expressions of the parents, or their tone of voice. Ministering to a child's physical needs, giving care when he is ill, being with him when he needs companionship and attention, comforting him in his sorrows, and sharing enthusiastically in his happy experiences—all these communicate love.

Older children, young teen-agers, and older youth also need to know that they are loved and wanted, and that their contribution is appreciated, both at home and at school. Lacking such assurance, some young people become deeply unhappy and emotionally disturbed. Others seek acceptance in groups or gangs where they win the admiration of companions by out-of-bounds behavior which may include sexual experimentation. They may not be seeking actual sexual experience so much as the support and assurance

that comes from a close relationship with another person of the opposite sex, for this close relationship is an important experience for this age group.

In a large industrial city, a panel of high school students named lack of love and affection as one of the four causes of delinquency which they considered most important, the others being poor home upbringing, overly strict parents, and bad choice of friends. "You should have a relaxed home without your mother getting mad at you and yelling all the time," said one of them.

Teachers and youth leaders, as well as parents, may play an important part in reassuring young people that they are wanted and that they "belong." The warm, friendly atmosphere of many youth centers and modern schools is an important influence on growing personalities and may help to fill the gap for young people who come from homes where love is lacking.

Adults should realize that a dependable, useful love does not mean that they must never direct or control the children or youth in their care. For example, a mother shows her love for her young child by teaching him to eat a variety of good foods, instead of indulging him in a one-sided diet of sweets. A physical education director who has genuine regard for the members of the high school team will show it by requiring regular, disciplined practice, the observance of training rules and sound safety precautions that make for a good team.

Through this mature kind of love, adults should help young people to form standards of good conduct and to develop the inner resources to live by those standards. It does not mean indulging every wish or whim, but it does mean helping youth to form values which will enable them to make wise choices.

Some adults may feel anxious about their own ability to show their affection to children and young people. If the affection is sincere, there is usually little reason for concern. The essential thing is to cultivate this ability. The young are quick to recognize a genuine liking for themselves, as a rule, and they readily learn that friendliness may be expressed in many different ways. Some people are naturally demonstrative or easily put their affection for young people into words. Others show it by a friendly smile. Still others may express their feelings chiefly through thoughtful actions or through the integrity of their dealings with youth. For example, most young people sense the underlying friendliness of a strict teacher who expects a high standard of work, but who always plays

fair, gives praise when it is due, and is ready to help those who need it.

Sex Education Comes Through Many Experiences

Whether adults give sex information or withhold it from a child, his experience of life itself begins his sex education at an early age. His world is full of interesting events that grow out of the fact that the human race is made of two sexes. There is great excitement because someone in the neighborhood gets married. A new baby arrives, and older children have interesting theories about where it came from. The child observes that mothers are different from fathers, and brothers from sisters. No youngster's mind long remains a blank page as to sex; without adult guidance, what is written there may be rather surprising.

Many adults, who wish to help children form ideas about sex that are good and true, are uncertain how to do it. An awareness of the fact that daily life is full of natural opportunities for sex education may make their task easier. Many opportunities occur at home, others arise from the child's own experiences at school or in the community or from events in the news. There are brief suggestions for handling a number of such occasions on pages 60-64 of this pamphlet.

Although it is certainly useful to take advantage of the natural events of daily life in guiding the child's sex education, there are times when thoughtful adults may wish that there were fewer such occasions! Nowadays, the world outside the home may intrude its point of view on the child's mind when he is still very young, through television, radio, motion pictures, newspapers, and picture magazines. Matter that is presented through these channels and is intended chiefly for adults may, however, find a large audience among children and youth. Along with their elders, they may view programs about family life, look at photographs of a mother's labor and her baby's birth, or read about sex crimes or sensational divorces.

To meet the impact of these experiences, it is more important than ever for children and youth to have the support that comes from happy family life, from sound sex attitudes and information at home, at church and at school, and from wholesome opportunities to work and play with companions of both sexes.

Sex Education for the Times We Live In

We live today against a background of recent wars and the continuing threat of war. In the confusion of such times, thousands of

families are uprooted, many young couples plunge into hasty marriages, and others lower their standards of sexual behavior. Although in such times, many persons may become careless of the welfare of others and reckless in their own actions, sound values of family living and sexual conduct can be restored through the efforts of churches, families, schools and individuals who care about human personality. The times we live in call for such efforts.

Apart from the effects of war and national unrest, standards of family life and sex conduct have changed markedly since the beginning of this century. The divorce rate has increased.

Young people have greater freedom, and there are many more opportunities for the two sexes to be together without adult supervision. This present-day freedom imposes upon adults an obligation to educate young people to use their freedom wisely, so that youth will accept greater responsibility for governing their own actions by sound ethical principles.

Adults who work constantly with youth realize that many young people need substantial help in finding a firm basis for forming their own sound standards of sex conduct and family life. The changing ideas and standards of the past several decades have been confusing to many, especially to young people who have not grown up in a family where values and standards are constantly made clear, along with the needed facts.

Still another element of modern life that is related to sex education is the popular impression that modern antibiotics, or "miracle drugs," have done away with the risks from venereal infection. Possibly this impression may have removed some restraints on sexual conduct.

However, the modern drugs, effective as they are, will not control venereal diseases unless their use is combined with a continued public health program with sufficient personnel and facilities to seek out and treat sources and contacts of new cases and to see that treatment is available promptly for newly infected individuals. It is the combination of new drugs and effective efforts by the medical profession and health agencies that has brought about improvement.

Adults interested in sex education will want to help young people to understand that the community has a continuing responsibility for supporting a program to control the venereal diseases, and that promiscuous sex conduct continues to carry with it the risk of venereal infection, in spite of new drugs. Modern high school programs offer opportunities, for example in health education courses or in

biology or the social sciences, for young people to examine this problem to a suitable extent, along with their study of the control of other diseases.

Some persons also believe that restraints on sexual conduct may have been removed by the present-day widespread knowledge of contraception, since young people may conclude that they can have sexual intercourse before marriage without the risk that pregnancy will occur. There is always a risk of pregnancy in those circumstances because young couples who indulge in premarital intercourse usually obtain their contraceptive information from unreliable sources. In secret or hurried relations, they are likely to be careless in their precautions, or else they do not take any.

It seems likely that knowledge, or lack of it, about contraception is not the determining factor in any increase in illegitimacy, but that it is only one of the factors in an era when uncertainty and confusion about sex conduct are rather widespread. Adults who are associated with youth can help to clear up such confusion if they themselves, by example and teaching, show a mature appreciation of family life and of sex conduct that respects the welfare and the personality of each partner.

There are a number of aspects of present-day life that are dis-

tinctly encouraging in their possibilities for effective sex education. One such factor is the tendency toward a companionable relationship between the adults and the children and youth in a family. Such a relationship makes it natural to talk about daily happenings related to sex, and to move from such general conversations to the questions or matters of interest that the children and young people of the family may have on their minds. This gives status to the young people, for it makes them feel that they have an accepted and important part in the exchange of ideas in the family.

Young parents are also increasingly eager to provide for the sex education of their children, and better prepared to do so than earlier generations of parents. The increasing number of opportunities for the study of child development and family life that are available to parents have been most helpful in this respect. There are more written materials* which parents may use themselves and others which they may give to their children. Good films and other visual materials are also available. There seems to be a growing number of schools that are ready to work with the parents of a community in providing sex education.

In general, there are more opportunities today than in the past for boys and girls to work, play, and study together, and thus to learn to understand each other. In many communities, good recreational facilities offer wholesome social contacts for boys and girls, and young men and women, and these are important in the sexual development of young people.

Not least of the encouraging elements of today's situation is our growing knowledge of human behavior, including its sexual aspects, and the use of such knowledge in marriage counseling by physicians, either in their private practice or through marriage counseling centers in a community. The growing number of ministers, priests, and rabbis who are specially prepared in this field is also encouraging. For help in finding a reliable individual or agency to give such counsel, one may go for information to the county medical society, or to a council of social agencies in the community, or one may write to The American Association of Marriage Counselors, 9 East 84th Street, New York, New York, for the location of the nearest specialist in marriage counseling.

*This pamphlet for example, is one of a series on sex education, in which the others are "Parents' Responsibility," for parents of young children; "A Story About You," for children 9 to 12; "Finding Yourself," for boys and girls, 12 to 15; and "Approaching Adulthood," for older teenagers and young adults.

Chapter 2

YOUR ASSETS IN SEX EDUCATION

As an adult who has a responsible stake in sex education, you may approach the task with more confidence if you first take stock of your assets. You may find such an attempt helpful, whether you are a parent, youth leader, teacher, minister, physician or nurse.

Learning from Your Own Experiences

First, you have a store of experiences, accumulated during your own sexual development through your childhood and youth. The painful memories, as well as the pleasant ones, may give you greater understanding and sympathy for the young whom you wish to help.

You're a father now—but do you remember how moody you were at fourteen, when your best friend betrayed you by becoming interested in the girls? You're a mother of three, but you still haven't forgotten that awful moment at school when you began to menstruate for the first time and weren't sure what to do about it. You're a high school teacher now, and your younger brother is a doctor, but you still remember your shock when you were first introduced to the new, baldheaded baby, as well as your later pleasure when, as a smiling, curly-headed toddler, he was old enough for you to play with him.

Even though you will not expect your children to repeat the same experiences, your memories can give insight into your children's needs if you reflect on the place of such events in your own growing up.

Knowing Why You Feel as You Do About Sex

As you carry your responsibilities in sex education, it will be helpful to be aware of your own feelings about sex and to try to understand why you feel the way you do. An older physician who had been the helpful counselor of many young people wrote, "I was brought up in a world where human sex was just plain nasty. Pregnancy was something to hide, and to this day, human sex is not for me an entirely natural phenomenon. I know the feeling is wrong, but nevertheless it still exists. A bit more freedom of discussion could have made a difference in my own life. Certainly keeping things under cover answers no problems." His understanding of

himself made an asset of feelings that otherwise might have been a hindrance, since he thus gained an appreciation of the problems and questions of the youth whom he advised.

Getting Along with the Younger Generation

You have a great advantage if you like children and young people and are able to win their confidence, so that they feel free to exchange ideas, ask questions, and discuss their problems with you. The ability to get along well and to talk easily with young people may be cultivated and may grow with experience, as many a teacher has learned who faced her first pupils with diffidence.

Observing How Individuals Grow and Develop

As parent, teacher, or youth leader, you also can count as an asset your knowledge of how individuals grow and develop. Especially valuable is your knowledge of the particular boys and girls in your care and of the age group to which they belong. You know how they are growing physically, how intelligent they are, what things interest them, what kinds of questions they ask, what their friendships are like, what their problems are. You have realized that they pass through various stages of physical, mental, and emotional development, and you are ready to understand that sexual development should be considered as natural and normal as any other phase of child growth and development. Some of the basic information about sexual development is given in Chapter 4 of this pamphlet.

Setting an Example

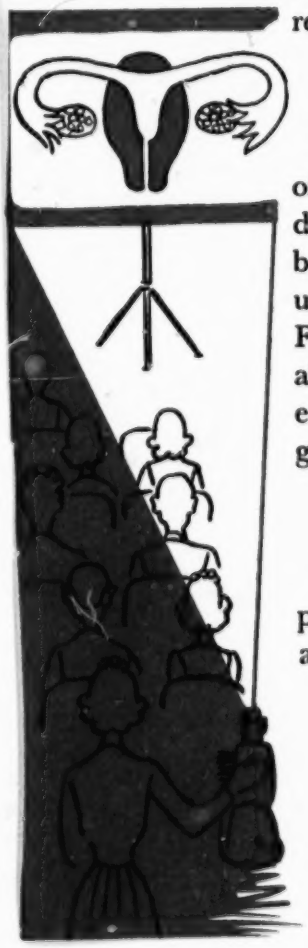
The example you set is another factor in what you may accomplish in sex education. Children are likely to copy their parents or other adults whom they love and respect. In homes where the parents' love for each other and for their children is expressed in mutual consideration and respect, the children are likely to learn to give such love. If parents avoid mention of sex as something "dirty," their children too are likely to be prudish. At the other extreme, if parents use coarse language in speaking of sex or often make vulgar references to it, their children probably will speak of sex in the same way. When parents speak lightly of irregular sexual conduct, it is not surprising that the sex conduct of their children reflects the

parents' attitudes. Wherever adults set an example of integrity and thoughtfulness for others, young people may be helped to form friendships based on those qualities, which are as important in relations between the sexes as in other areas of human relationships.

There may be a number of reasons why adults are held back from accepting their responsibilities in sex education; perhaps embarrassment about sex or lack of knowledge of the technical information may be the explanation. It is especially unfortunate that some parents never do face up to this responsibility, for ideally, parents should give sex information because sex education is a part of total family life education. Nevertheless, the efforts of school, church, or community often are needed to supplement and reinforce what has been done in the home.

Knowing the Basic Facts About Sex

There is no doubt that you need to know the basic facts about sex. You do not need to know *all* the facts, but you do need the information most likely to be required by the children and youth in your care. You need to know where to go for information that you do not have, for there will be occasions when it is best to say, "I don't know; let's look that up." In Chapter 3 of this pamphlet there is a brief resume of the facts about the human male and female reproductive systems, conception, prenatal development, and birth. Other references are suggested on pages 70-72.



Talking About Sex

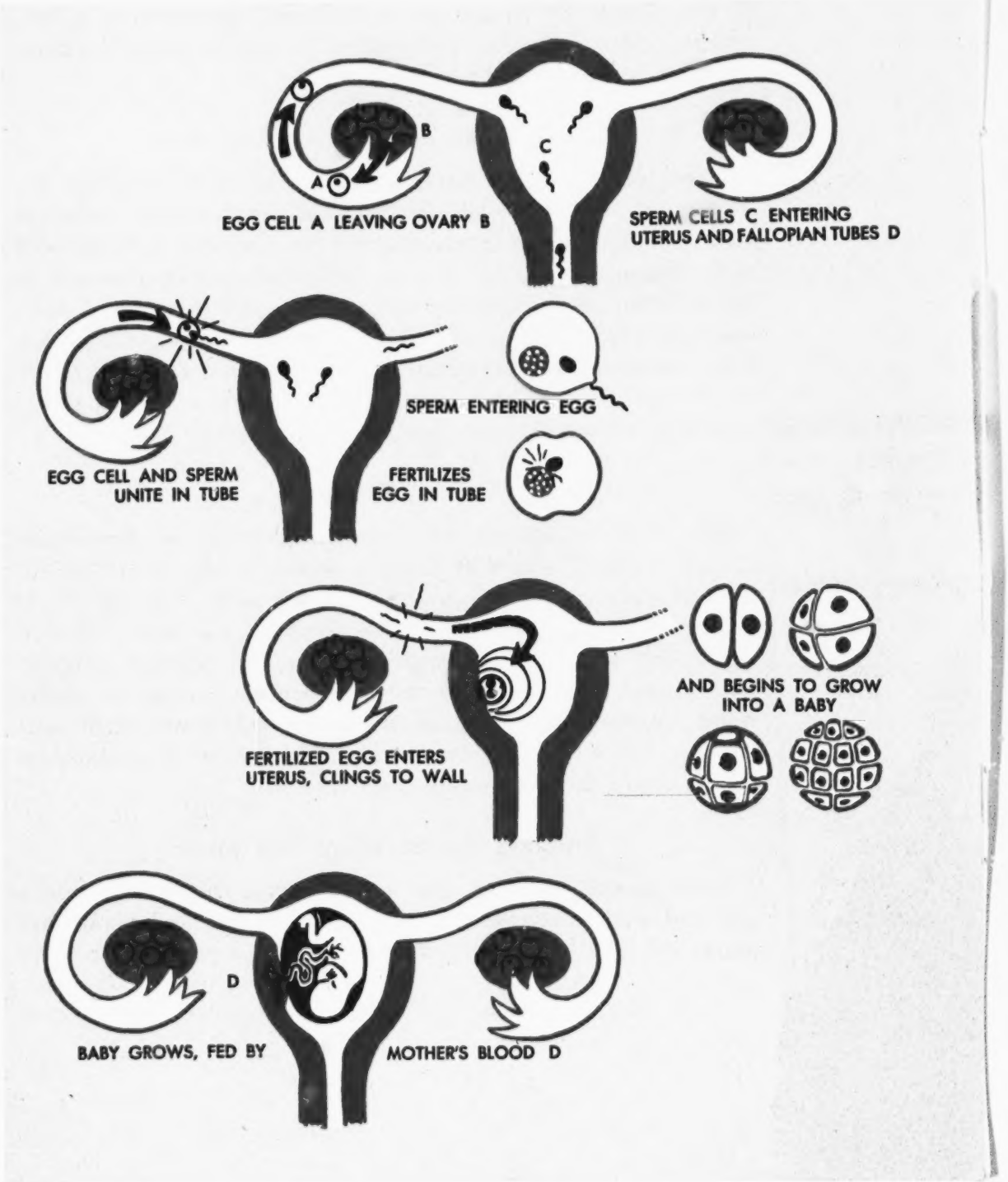
You need a vocabulary which you can use with ease. Knowledge of correct terms for parts of the body associated with sex and reproduction, such as navel, penis, vagina, and so forth, can help you to be more objective and unemotional about sex education. Ease in using such terms can be acquired gradually, through practice. Fathers and mothers should use them with each other in talking about the development of their children. Teachers and youth leaders may find such opportunities in study groups or professional groups where child development is discussed.

Brushing Up on What You Know

Some parents, teachers, and youth leaders have found that a practical way of refreshing their own knowledge and vocabulary about sex is to help in previewing films or in selecting books or

pamphlets or charts that are to be used in sex education by children or youth.

In many communities nowadays, opportunities to improve one's knowledge of sex education and family life education are increasing. Parent-teacher associations, youth agencies, schools, and churches are offering adult education courses, or special lectures, films or discussions on these subjects. If you wish such help, very possibly you may find it in your own community.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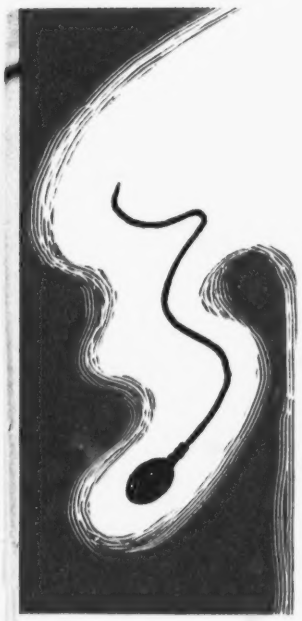


Chapter 3

INFORMATION, PLEASE!

There is no point in worrying about your responsibilities for giving sex information as if you were a nervous student, afraid of failing in his final examinations! Much of what you need to know is probably familiar to you, needing only to be freshened in your mind by a brief review.

You will not need to be the perfect teacher, for the young are used to gaps in the answers which their elders give to the questions they ask. They will appreciate your willingness to talk with them, to tell what you know, and to help find answers to what you do not know. The willingness may count for more than a reluctant, but complete answer, if it encourages them to come to you again.

For some of you, the following brief recounting of certain facts about reproduction may be helpful; for others, it may be too simple.

The Human Plan for Reproduction

The human plan for reproduction is a high type, far superior to many other forms of reproduction, in the protection it gives to the young. Moreover, the experience of human beings is greatly enriched by the family life that has developed around the human type of procreation.

The life of every person begins with the union of two special sex cells—the sperm cell, or spermatozoon (sper-ma-to-zō′-on) of the father, and the egg cell, or ovum (o′-vum) of the mother. The male and female bodies are intricately formed to make such union possible. The sex organs of the male are well designed to place the sperm cells inside the body of the woman, where they begin their journey to find an egg cell. The female body makes remarkable provisions for supplying the egg cells, for giving shelter and food to the unborn baby through the nine months of its development, and for helping the baby to be born.

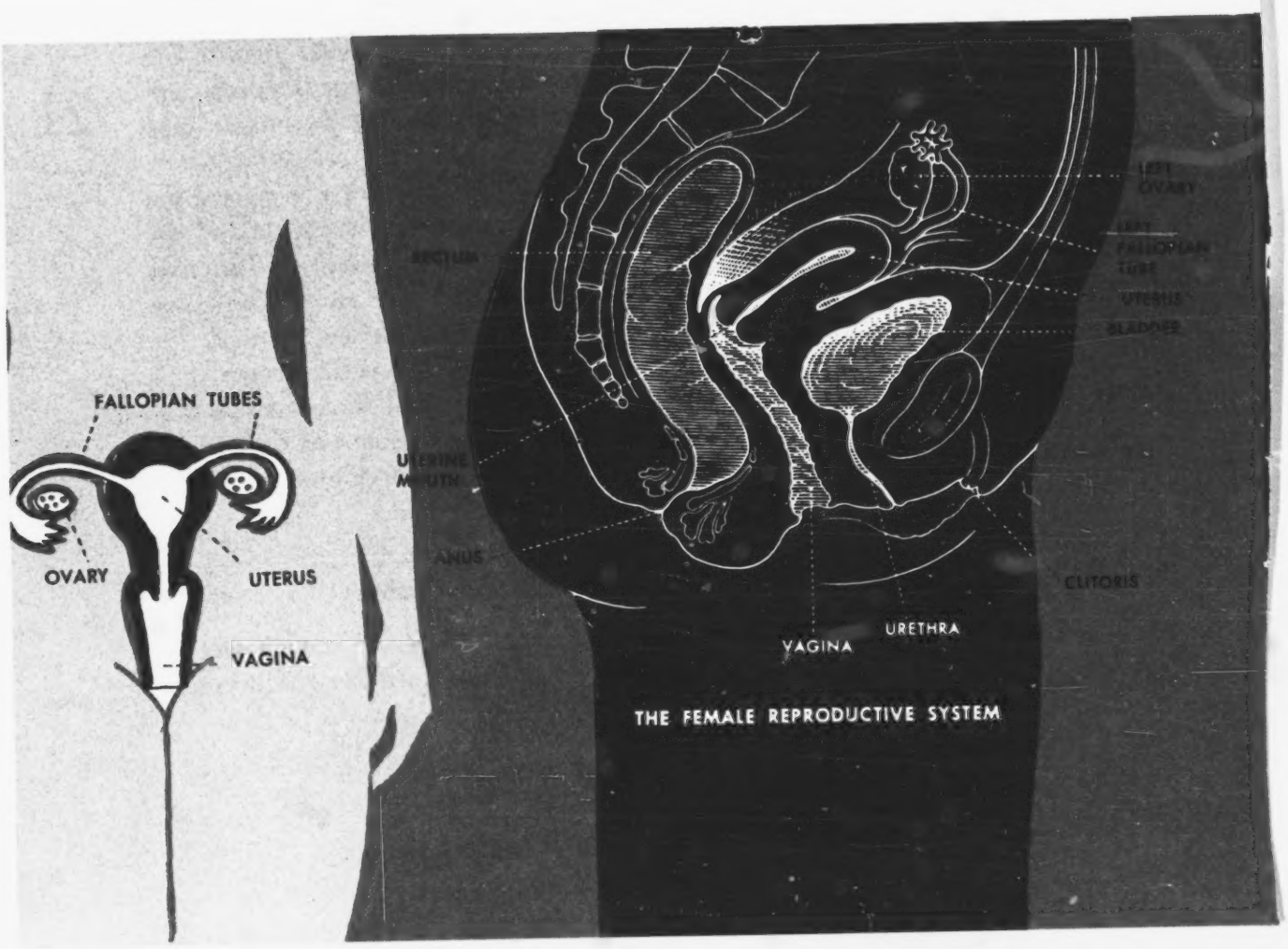
The Female Reproductive System

Egg cells are produced in the ovaries (ō′-va-ris), which are the female sex glands. The ovaries also produce hormones. A hormone

(hor′-mōn) is a chemical substance, formed in one organ or part of the body that is carried in the blood to another organ or part of the body which is thereby stimulated to some activity. The hormones of the ovaries affect growth and development in the girl and help to provide for the welfare of the baby during prenatal development. Girls and women have two ovaries, one on each side of the body, in the lower part of the abdomen. Each ovary is about the size and shape of an almond nut.

The ovaries of a baby girl already contain immature egg cells, but it is not until puberty that egg cells begin to mature. After that, one egg cell matures or ripens each month, as a rule, in a process called ovulation (o-vu-lā′-shun). Ovulation occurs in most women until about forty-five or more years, at the age when the menopause (men′-o-paws) takes place.

When ovulation occurs, the egg cell leaves the ovary and is drawn into the opening of one of the two Fallopian (fal-ō′pe-an) tubes. One of these tubes opens near each ovary and provides a passageway through which the egg cell is carried to the uterus (ū′-te-rus) by the motions of the fine, hair-like cilia which line the tubes.



THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

The uterus, or womb (wöm), is located in the lower abdomen with an ovary on each side. It is a hollow, thick-walled, muscular organ that in size and shape is something like a pear with the larger end up. The developing baby lives in the uterus during the nine months of his life before birth. The lower end of the uterus, called the cervix (ser′-viks), opens into the vagina (va-jī′-na).

The vagina is an elastic canal which connects the uterus with the outside of the body. It is the passageway through which sperm cells enter, as well as the opening through which the baby leaves its mother's body at birth. The outside opening of the vagina is between the legs, where it is protected by folds of skin and flesh known as the vulva (vul′-vah). Where the folds of the vulva meet in front, there is a sensitive tip of tissue called the clitoris (klit′-o-ris).

The opening of the vagina is partly covered by a membrane known as the hymen (hī′-men). At one time it was thought that a broken hymen meant that a woman had had sexual intercourse, but we now know that the thickness of the hymen varies in individuals, even at birth, and that it may become torn without the individual's knowing why or when.

The outside opening of the vagina lies between two other body openings. In front is the opening of the urethra (u-rē′-thrah), for the passage of urine from the body. Some distance behind the vagina opening is the anus (a′-nus) for the discharge of waste from the intestines.

More must be said now about the process of ovulation. First, an egg cell becomes surrounded by a small sac known as a follicle (fŏl′-ik-l), and goes to the surface of the ovary. There the follicle opens, releasing the ripened egg cell. The follicle then fills with cells called the "corpus luteum" (kor′-pus lu′-teum), or yellow body. The corpus luteum produces a hormone that causes the soft lining of the uterus to build up some new lining, providing an increased supply of blood. If an egg cell should be fertilized, the lining of the uterus would then be ready to receive and nourish it as it develops into a baby.

Most of the three or four hundred egg cells that leave the ovaries during a woman's life are not fertilized. When an egg cell is not fertilized, it disintegrates, and disappears after reaching the uterus. Then the corpus luteum shrinks, and stops making its hormone. As a result, the inner layer of the thickened lining of the uterus comes off and along with the extra blood passes out of the body

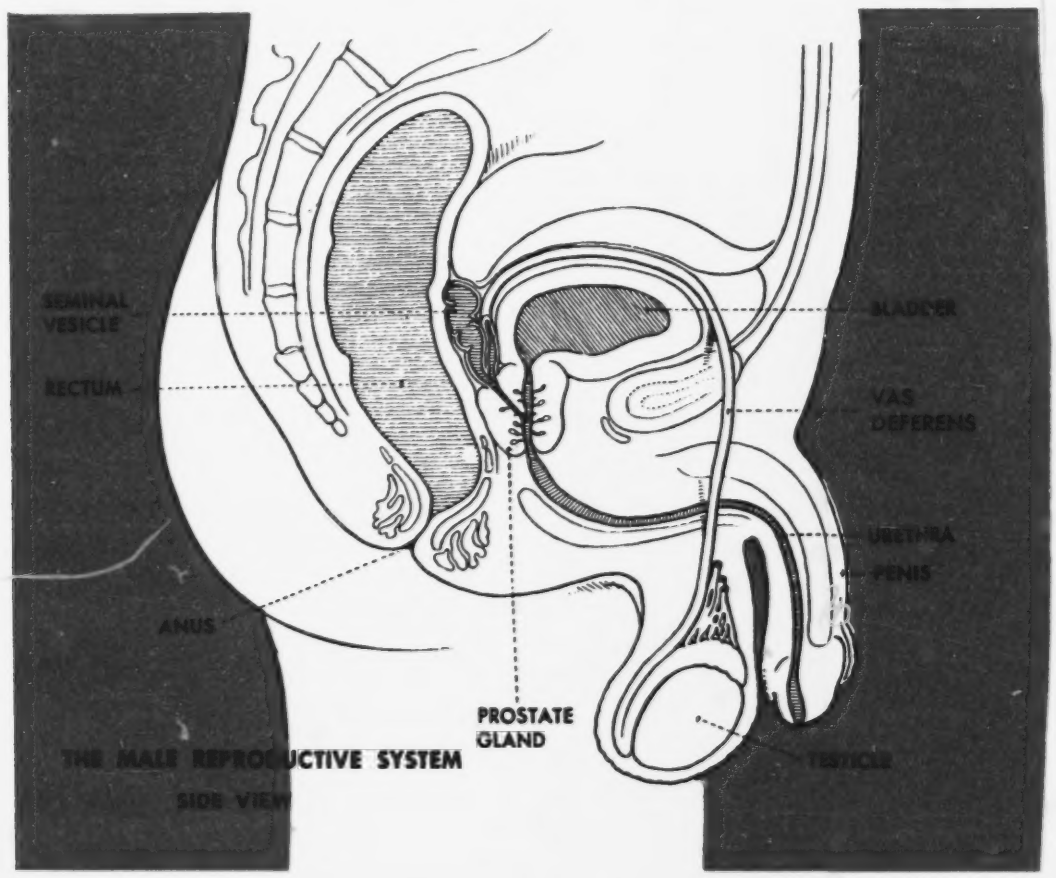
through the vagina. This discharge is menstruation (men-stru-ā′-shun).

The Male Reproductive System

The principal sex organs of the male are the two testes (tes′-tez), or testicles, (tes′-ti-kls), and the penis (pē′-nis). The testes are the male sex glands. Like the ovaries, they make a hormone which affects the boy's growth and sexual development. They also produce the spermatozoa or male sex cells when the boy reaches puberty and, from then on, into his later years of life.

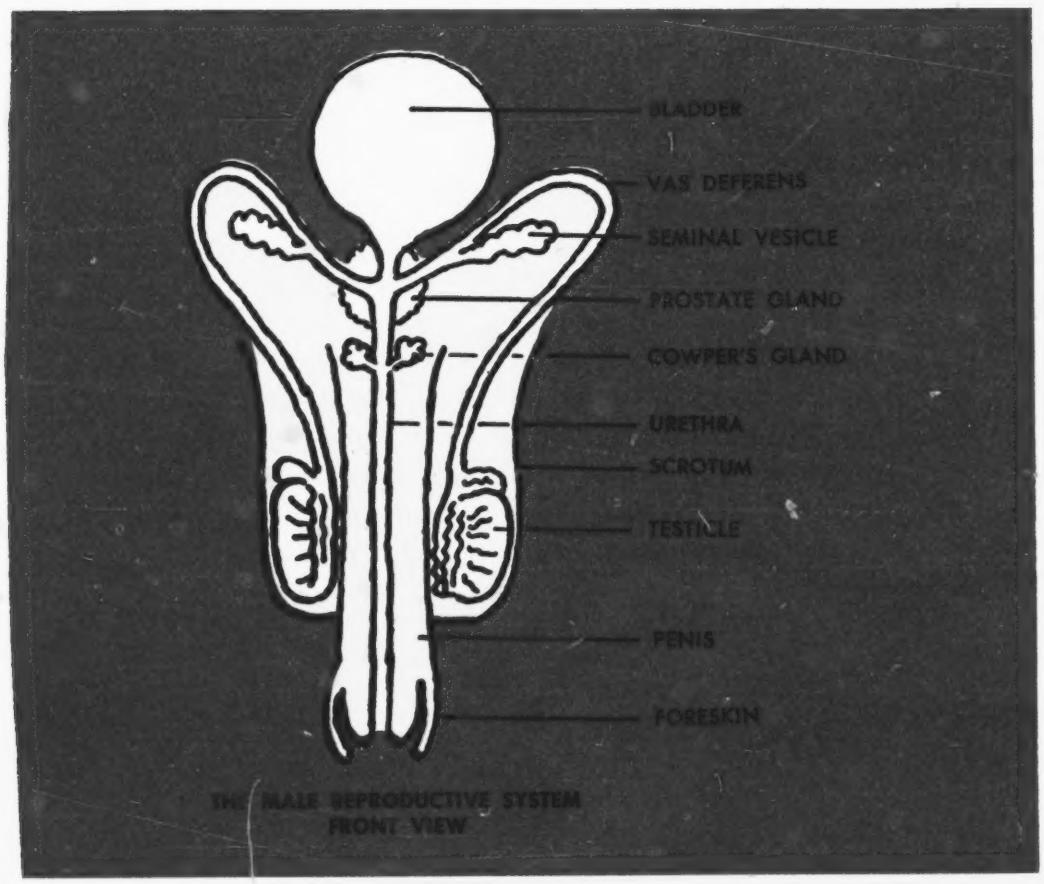
The male sex organs make complex, delicately adjusted provisions for the growth, storage, and discharge of the sperm cells. The two testes are suspended between the legs in a pouch or sac of skin called the scrotum (skrō′-tum). Each testis is about the size of a plum or a small egg, about an inch thick, and one and three-quarters inches long. The testes are filled with hundreds of fine, threadlike tubes, or tubules, tightly coiled, in which the sperm cells grow.

The spermatozoa are extremely small, only about 1/85,000 the size of the egg cell, which is one of the larger cells of the human body. There may be from four to five hundred millions of sperm cells in a teaspoonful of the semen (sē′-men) in which they are discharged from the body. When seen under a powerful microscope, a sperm cell looks something like a tadpole, with a larger head at one end and an active tail which enables it to swim in body fluids.



The penis hangs in front of the testes. It is shaped something like a thumb, but is usually larger. It varies in size, but its size has nothing to do with sexual virility or fertility. The urethra runs the length of the penis and provides a channel through which sperm cells leave the body. The urethra is also the outlet for the discharge of urine from the bladder, but sperm cells and urine do not normally pass through it at the same time.

The sperm cells reach the urethra in a complex journey. All of the small, coiled tubules in one testis open into one larger tube, through which the sperm cells leave the testis. Behind each testis, in the scrotum, this larger tube forms a mass of coils which may serve as a temporary storage space for the sperm cells. This organ, known as the epididymis (ep-i-did′-i-mis), is about two inches long and a fourth of an inch wide. The lower end of each epididymis is joined to a tube, or duct, called the seminal (sem′-in-al) duct, or vas deferens (vas def′-er-ens). Each duct rises into the groin and finally opens into the urethra. Before opening into the urethra, each duct is connected with an organ known as the seminal vesicle (ves′-i-kl), which, as one of its functions, serves as a storage sac for sperm cells. After the seminal ducts unite with the urethra, the combined channel passes through the prostate (pros′-tate) gland and into the penis. The secretions of the epididymis, the seminal vesicles, and the prostate gland mingle to form the whitish fluid known as semen.



The end of the penis at birth is partly covered by loose skin which is often removed by a physician in a minor operation known as circumcision.

Although usually limp and soft, the penis, under sexual excitement of mind or body, fills with blood so that it becomes firm, and an erection occurs. In a man, or in a boy whose sex organs have matured, semen may then be discharged from the erect penis as a result of the contraction of certain tissues. This is an ejaculation. The penis then becomes limp again.

Conception, Prenatal Development, and Birth

Various technical or semitechnical terms, such as coitus (cō′-i-tus), copulation (cop-u-lā′-shun), sexual intercourse, or mating, may be used to describe the sex act in which sperm cells are deposited in the human female. Such terms may be an aid in discussing reproduction and the sexual relations between husband and wife, although they give no picture of the love that brings husband and wife together, or of the strengthening of the marriage bonds which may grow out of this intimate relationship.

The caresses of husband and wife may arouse sexual desire and thus cause an increased flow of blood to the sex organs and an increase in the secretions that moisten them, as well as other body changes that are a preparation for intercourse. The husband's penis becomes erect and then can fit into the wife's vagina. With rhythmic movements this can give pleasure to both husband and wife. At the climax of intercourse, there is an ejaculation of semen from the penis. After intercourse, both husband and wife may feel the relaxation of deep satisfaction.

When sperm cells are released into the vagina, they swim from that passage into the uterus and on into the tubes. If there is an egg cell in one of the tubes, one sperm cell may unite with it to make a fertilized egg cell. This is the moment of conception, and after that, the woman is pregnant. From then on, during pregnancy, ovulation and menstruation will not normally occur.

When the egg cell and the sperm cell unite, the child's sex is determined at that moment, as well as the hereditary traits that are passed on to him from both the mother's and the father's sides of the house. There are two kinds of sperm cells, which apparently are formed in equal numbers. If one kind unites with an egg cell, the child will be a girl; the child will be a boy if the other kind of sperm cell fertilizes the egg.

Soon after the egg cell is fertilized, it divides into two cells; then four, eight, sixteen—and on and on. About eight days after conception, the mass of growing cells, about 1/50 of an inch in diameter, reaches the uterus and nestles into the lining that is now ready to receive it. The cells arrange and rearrange themselves in many ways and eventually form into three layers from which will develop all the different parts of the body. The skin, for example, will develop from the outer layer, the digestive tract from the inner layer, and the skeleton and nervous system from the third layer.

The developing baby is spoken of as an embryo (em′-bre-o) during the early weeks of life. From about three months until birth, it is called a fetus (fē′-tus).

At first, the unborn child looks little like a human being. At the end of the second month, it is about an inch long, its head is developing, hands and feet are forming, and the external sex organs have begun to appear. However, it is not possible to tell one sex from the other at this state, since male and female organs look the same at first.

At the end of the third month, the main parts of the body have appeared. The mother may feel the baby's movements around the fourth or fifth month, and by five or six months the developing baby looks rather as he will at birth, except that he is only about a foot long and is very lean. In the last two or three months before

birth, he grows plumper and longer and his internal organs develop enough so that he is able to live in the outside world. At birth, the baby is usually about 20 inches long and about seven pounds in weight.

Some babies are born before the full term of nine lunar months. Some such babies may be mature at their birth, even though their period of prenatal development has been shorter than usual. Frequently, however, babies born before full term are immature. These babies are commonly spoken of as "premature babies" if they weigh less than 5½ pounds and are less than 18 inches in length from head to toe. When these babies survive, they develop as other children do, but at first they may need special care at the hospital in an incubator that provides the same even temperature as the mother's body.

When the baby is in his mother's body, he lives in fluid and receives food and oxygen by certain special arrangements. Early in his development, a cord containing some of the baby's blood vessels attaches him to the lining of the uterus. The cord, known as the umbilical (um-bil′-i-kl) cord, is attached to the baby's own body at his navel.

Where the cord is attached to the uterus, there is a special network of blood vessels, called the placenta (pla-sen′-ta). In the placenta, the blood vessels of the mother and of the baby mingle closely, but the mother's blood does not flow through the baby's blood vessels. Instead, food substances and oxygen in her blood filter through the blood vessel walls into the blood of the baby, and are carried throughout his body in his blood stream. Wastes are carried in the baby's blood stream to the placenta. There they filter out through the vessel walls into the mother's blood and her body gets rid of them. Thus the mother eats, breathes, and gets rid of waste substances for the unborn baby.

By the last few weeks of pregnancy, the baby usually has taken a position head down in the uterus. At the end of pregnancy, the muscles of the uterus stop stretching, (as they have been doing throughout pregnancy), and begin to contract instead. This process, called labor, pushes the baby, usually head first, into the vagina. The opening from the uterus into the vagina stretches wide and the vagina also stretches tremendously, and thus the baby can be born. In about 5% of births, some other part of the baby's body, perhaps an arm or foot, appears first, instead of the head.

When the baby first appears, the cord is still attached to his navel and to the placenta. The doctor ties the cord and cuts it a short

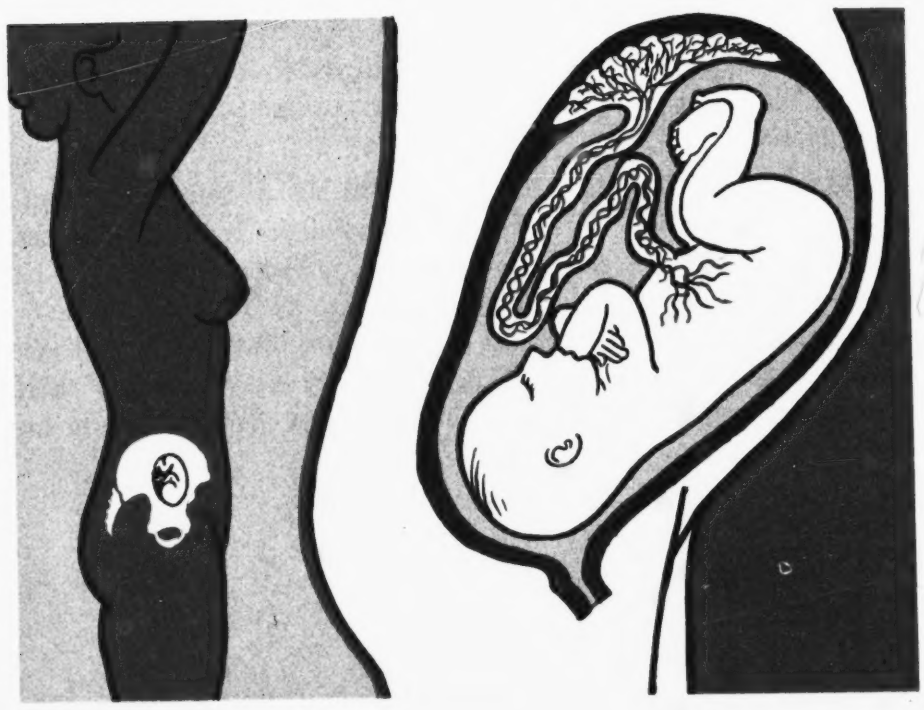
distance from the baby's body. Soon the bit of cord that is left will dry up, and the place where it was attached will appear as the baby's navel. Neither mother nor child feels any pain when the cord is cut, because there are no nerves in it. After the baby is born, muscular contractions separate the placenta from the uterus and force it out, along with the rest of the cord, which is about two feet long. This is the afterbirth.

When a physician examines a pregnant woman, he sometimes finds that her birth passages are too small to allow the baby to pass through. He then plans to remove the baby from the uterus by an operation on the abdomen when it is time for the birth. This is called a cesarian birth, because Julius Caesar is supposed to have been born in that way. Babies born by the cesarian method grow up in the same manner as other children.

After the baby's birth, the uterus and other parts of the mother's body return to much the same size as before the pregnancy, except that the birth passages remain somewhat larger.

During pregnancy the mother's breasts prepare to supply milk for the baby. They become larger and firmer, and the area around the nipples grows darker. Physicians frequently advise a mother to breast-feed her baby if possible. Many mothers are able to supply milk from their own breasts as long as the baby needs it. After the mother stops nursing her baby, her baby is said to be weaned from the breast. Her breasts then gradually stop producing milk.

Readers who wish more detailed information about reproduction may refer to the publications listed on page 70.



Chapter 4

TOWARD SEXUAL MATURITY

You accept as obvious the fact that physical growth comes slowly, and that children increase in height and weight, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, for many years. You expect the baby to creep before he walks or runs. You smile at the exuberant, aimless running of the little child, while you know that the high school youth employs running as a necessary skill in sports, such as tennis or basketball.

You realize that little children develop mentally through many steps of learning, and that the first grade will be followed by the second, and the third, and so on, in a process of learning that need not stop when school days are over. You assume that children develop emotionally too, as when you say, "You're a big boy now, too old to cry about a little cut on your finger, even if it does hurt."

There are Stages of Sexual Development

It should be equally easy for you to accept the facts that sexual feelings and sexual activity do not occur suddenly for the first time in an individual when his sex organs are ready for reproduction, and that sexual maturity is reached through various stages. The child's sex organs go through a process of development, accompanied by other bodily changes. The child's feelings about his body change, as do his interests and emotions about members of the other sex. His experiences with sex, and what he learns from them, will change. All of these changes are mingled in a process of development that goes on through many years, in one phase or another, until maturity.

You will understand the meaning of the sexual behavior of children and young people best when you consider it in relation to the stage of development they have reached, instead of judging it by adult standards of behavior. For example, the child of three or four years may repeat sex words he has heard, but his use of them would not have the same significance as their use by an older child who understands their meaning. Discussions of sexual development

at different ages are found in the other pamphlets of this series and in the succeeding parts of this chapter.

But Individuals Differ

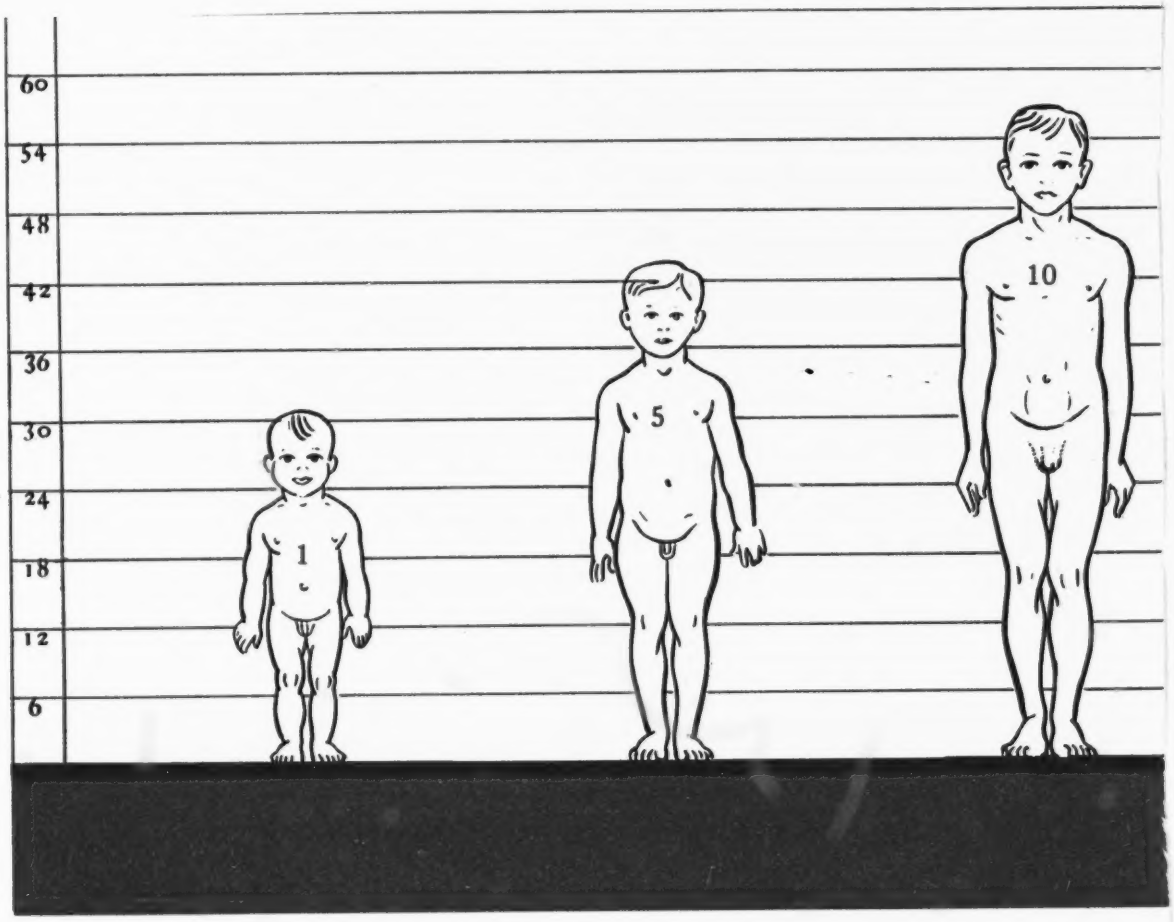
Although it is useful to understand the rather general pattern of sexual development, you have probably observed that individual children show great differences. Your knowledge of these differences will help you to provide the kind of sex education that is needed by the particular children or young people in your care. For example, the girl who menstruates early, say at eleven, probably will show other signs that she is maturing sexually, before menstruation occurs. (See page 38.) If you observe these signs, you will have an opportunity to prepare her for the beginning of menstruation, giving her fuller information than might be needed by her eleven-year-old girl friends who are less mature physically.

Sexual Development is Part of the Whole

Because the sexual aspects of life are not in a separate compartment, but are meshed in with the child's entire life, his general health, of body, mind, and emotions has an important bearing on his sexual growth and development. Every parent knows that in order to be healthy and strong, children and young people need good food, plenty of sleep, exercise, sun, and fresh air.

Children need good emotional nourishment too. As has already been pointed out, they need to be loved and accepted for themselves, as they are. They need the security of a home where parents are on hand whenever they are needed, a home where the children feel that they belong. They need a faith to live by. They need guidance in their problems, and they need encouragement in growing up. Whether you are mother, father, teacher, minister, physician, or youth leader, you are eager to supply these and other essentials for healthy growth and development. In doing so, you also assist the child in his sexual development.

The following pages suggest some of the phases of sexual development through which children pass, as well as common differences you are likely to see in the children you know. The information is given in four groupings, covering (1) development in infancy and up to age eight or nine years, (2) boys and girls of about nine to twelve, (3) young teen-agers of about 12 to 15, and (4) older teen-



agers and young adults of about 16 to 21 years. If you are particularly interested in one of those groupings, you may want to make use of the corresponding pamphlet in this series.

PART 1: INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Physical Development

At birth, the baby's weight is 800 times what it was at the end of the second month of prenatal development! This terrific, bursting growth energy seems to spill over into the first year of life after birth, but to a lesser degree. In that first year, most babies triple their birth weight and increase their length by about half. They grow more slowly in the second year and after that still more slowly, until there is a spurt of growth just before and during puberty.

The baby's rapid growth does not affect all parts of his body evenly. For example, at birth his head is large and his legs short in comparison with adult proportions. The various parts of the body later go through periods of relatively rapid growth at differing times, until adult size and proportions are reached.

In both sexes, the organs of reproduction are completely formed at birth. The ovaries of a baby girl contain thousands of immature egg cells, but neither the ovaries of the baby girl nor the testes of the baby boy are yet capable of discharging sex cells. The sex organs increase a little in size during the first three or four years of the child's life, but even then are only a small fraction of their adult weight. However, even a young baby boy can have an erection of the penis. This is especially likely to happen when the baby has a full bladder. It does not mean that anything is the matter with him, and parents need not be worried for fear such a manifestation of sex is unnatural.

During the prenatal development of a baby boy, the testes first develop rather high in the abdomen. At birth, one or both testes may have descended from inside the baby's body into the scrotum, or at least may be in the process of descending. It may be a few years before they have both descended into the scrotum. In the higher temperatures in the abdomen, conditions are not right for the complete formation of sperm cells. For this reason, a doctor should be consulted if one or both testes fail to descend into the scrotum.

Although the young child's sex organs do not function by producing sex cells, the child's experiences in these early years are important in his sex education. In these years he can begin to form healthy relationships with other people and to develop healthy attitudes about sex.

Learning to Give Friendship and Love

Even though you may not be willing to admit it about your own two-year-old, you may have noticed that your neighbor's toddler is a self-centered little creature, always wanting your child's toys for himself! However, there is no shame in admitting that your child too is self-centered, for all children begin life that way. Most of them learn to get along reasonably well with many other persons by the time they enter school. Without this ability, their relationships with the other sex may be difficult later on.

It has already been pointed out that children who receive abundant love at home are more likely to be able to give love and friendship generously, as they grow up and reach an age to marry and establish their own homes. In the early years, little children may pass through several phases in their feelings toward their parents. For a time, perhaps at the age of four, five, or six, there may be a period

of romantic attachment when the boy may say to his mother, or the girl to her father, "I'm going to marry you." This sentiment passes and the first or second grade child may go through a phase when he may not be able to accept hugs or kisses, although he still wants and needs to be loved. The important thing to remember is that the child's need for love is always there, through all phases of his development.

During the preschool years, children do not usually show much sex preference in their friendships, and they play happily with either sex. The first year or two of school may see the beginning of a period when the child's own sex will be preferred.

Sex Attitudes Begin to Form Early in Life

There is room to mention only a few of the ways in which the child's sex attitudes may be affected in the early years. By school age, most children have learned to distinguish between the sexes. Perhaps you have helped your children to do so by answering their questions about differences between boys and girls. Moreover, most children of that age have begun to realize that different things are expected of boys and of girls, of men and of women. Perhaps you have helped to shape these ideas, too, if you have made some such remarks as, "What do you want a doll for? Little boys don't play with dolls!"

In homes where mother and father regard each other's work and duties with respect, children are likely to reflect these attitudes. But if the father looks down on homemaking as "woman's work" or considers it a slur on his earning ability when his wife works, the children are quick to realize it. Confusion about the role of father and mother need not arise if families share responsibilities amiably and interpret fairly to children any activities which are at variance with neighborhood or community standards.

Another factor which may affect the little child's sex attitudes is the family attitude toward bodily excretions. To a baby, there is nothing disgusting about bowel movements, and it is not uncommon for the child of two or three years to play with his own excretions. The little child's feeling about the excretory parts of the body may affect his attitudes toward the reproductive organs because they are near each other, and if he learns to feel disgust toward the one, it may affect his feelings toward the other. The mother who can

diaper her child and keep him clean in a matter-of-fact, cheerful way avoids emphasizing such an unfortunate association of ideas and feelings.

Early Questions About Sex

In his early years, the child is full of curiosity, and is eager to learn. His questions are likely to be about the mother's part in reproduction. Children of about three to five years may ask, "Where did I come from?" or "Where did the new baby came from?" Many children are not ready to learn of the father's part in reproduction until the age of eight or nine, although some six year olds may ask for this information and be able to understand it.

You would not give all of this information at once to a young child, unless his questions showed that he was ready for it, and this is unlikely to happen. It is better to tell the story a little at a time, giving an answer to all the questions the child asks, but making sure the answer is one he can understand.

For example, when the three-year-old asks where the new baby came from, it is usually enough to say, "The baby grew inside his mother." The child will ask the same questions about sex over and over, in different ways, as he grows older. In answering the questions or in conversations about birth that come up naturally, you can add gradually to the child's store of knowledge.

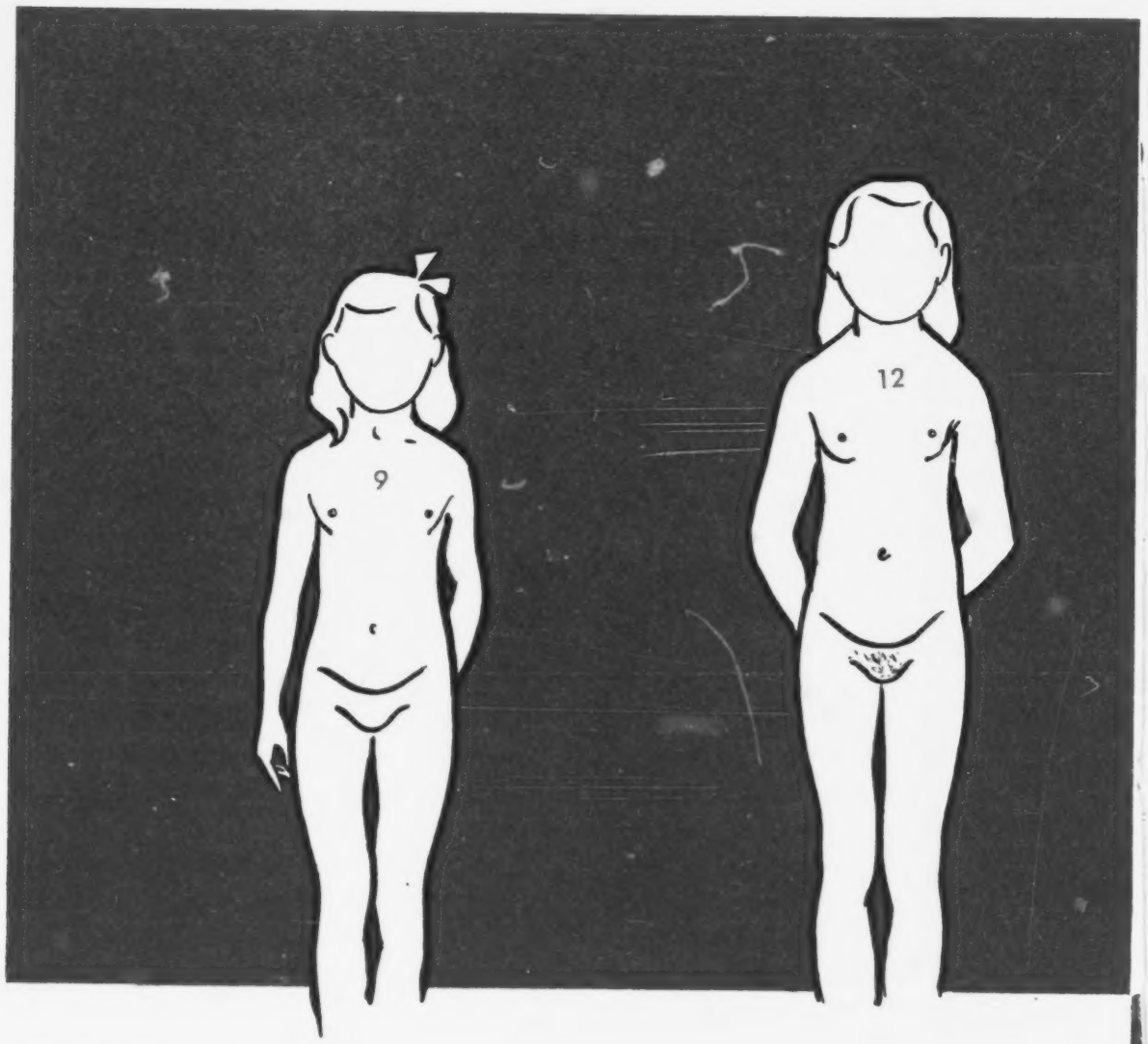
About Sex Play

It is difficult for an adult to realize how many kinds of facts the baby and the little child must learn about size, color, texture, space, time, people, bodies—their own and other people's—the list is endless. It is not surprising that little children may explore their own bodies as a result of their natural curiosity.

Babies often handle their sex organs in a casual way, just as they often play with their toes or their ears. This casual bodily exploration should not disturb parents.

Older children sometimes discover that they receive pleasure from manipulation of their sex organs. When this is occasionally observed in a little child, it is probably best to overlook it. If such sex play seems excessive, consultation with the family physician is warranted.

It is also rather common for children of about four to nine years to take part in various kinds of sex play (perhaps under the guise



of playing "doctor"), in which they remove all or part of their clothing and perhaps touch each other. Sometimes they secrete themselves in the bathroom and whisper or giggle about toilet functions.

An adult facing such a situation at home, school, camp, or club can handle it best by keeping calm, and promoting some other type of play activity, without shaming the children. The children themselves often feel uneasy about such sex play, and usually feel relieved when an adult puts an end to it, lending a friendly hand in starting some other kind of interesting activity. It may be that the child's unanswered questions about sex and the urge to find the answers have led him into sex play, even though he has not put his questions into words. The adults' cue then is to answer the unspoken questions.

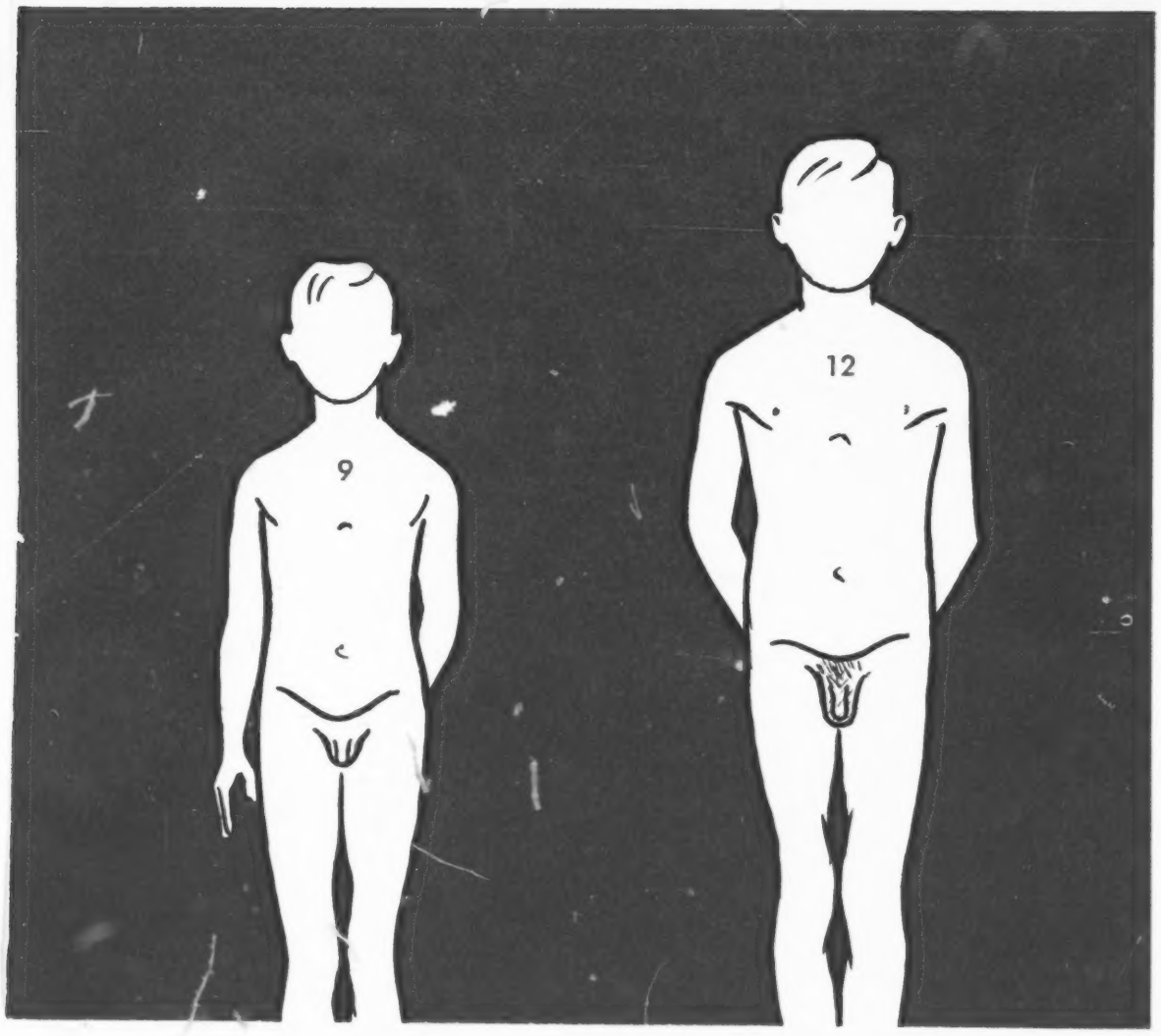
Another pamphlet in this series, "Parents' Responsibility," contains further discussion on the sexual development of young children as well as specific suggestions for answering many of their questions.

PART 2: CHILDREN FROM 9 to 12 YEARS

Physical Development

The rather slow, steady growth of the earlier school years may, for a time, continue into the years from 9 to 12, especially with boys. However, girls of this age are likely to have a spurt of growth for a year or two. This spurt may begin as early as eight, or as late as fourteen years, but for many girls it is most noticeable at about twelve. Boys are likely to begin this rapid growth between the ages of eleven and sixteen, but usually between twelve and fourteen. A period of filling out, with a marked increase in the rate of gain in weight, usually follows in the six months or a year after the greatest gain in height.

Each child takes his own pace in growing. A child sometimes may worry because a best friend grows faster. Boys of eleven and twelve may be distressed when girls of their age pass them in height, as is



often the case. Girls who are "early growers" may feel out of place in a class of smaller children. As parent, teacher, or perhaps the leader of Cubs or Brownies, or a camp group, you can reassure them that it is natural for children to grow differently. The friends of the girl who feels too big will catch up with her; in a few years, the boys will be taller than the girls again. Beyond giving such reassurance when it is needed, you can help to provide the best possible conditions for each child to grow his best, and you can teach the youngsters themselves to live healthfully.

The spurt of growth in height and weight is the forerunner of puberty, the time of life when sex organs mature, and the sex glands begin to discharge sex cells. (The years between puberty and adulthood are adolescence.) In girls, the period of rapid growth in height usually begins from two and a half to three and a half years before the first menstruation. The year of most rapid growth in height usually occurs within two years before the first menstrual period, while the greatest gain in weight may come only a few months before that event. Earlier, faster growth is usually associated with earlier menstruation. There is also reason to believe that boys have their greatest gain in height at about the time they reach puberty. If a child's growth records are kept throughout his childhood, they can reveal a good deal about his progress in development.

The pituitary gland, at the base of the brain, produces hormones which help to regulate growth in height and body proportions, and a pituitary hormone also causes the sex glands of children to grow larger and to mature. When the sex glands mature, they produce their own hormones which, in turn, cause the pituitary gland to make less of the growth hormone. As a result, growth in height slows down not long after boys and girls become sexually mature.

The hormones of the sex glands also bring about the appearance of the secondary sex characteristics. In girls, these include the rounding of the hips, with an increase in the width of the pelvis, the filling out of the breasts, and the appearance of hair on the lower abdomen and under the arms, often but not necessarily in that order. The girl's voice also becomes richer and fuller, although the change is not as noticeable as in boys. Menstruation usually occurs after the breasts have begun to fill out, and hair has appeared on the lower abdomen.

In a group of girls from nine to twelve years, some will have begun to menstruate at eleven or even ten years, although menstruation

most often begins at about thirteen and may begin as late as fifteen or sixteen. The secondary sex characteristics also begin at varying ages, earlier for girls who menstruate early and later for those who mature late.

One of the earliest signs of the approach of puberty in boys is an increase in the size of the penis and the testes. This increase may occur at eleven or twelve, usually a year or more before pubic hair appears on the lower abdomen. Such hair usually appears at thirteen or fourteen, but sometimes as early as ten or eleven. It is followed by the growth of hair under the arms, and later on the face. The change of voice usually takes place at fourteen or fifteen. The proportions of the boy's body also change, with a widening of the shoulders, but his hips do not widen and round out as in a girl.

In a group of boys from nine to twelve years, only a few will have matured sexually to the point of having ejaculations of semen.

As an adult responsible for children of this age, you need to be sure that they are informed about the body changes related to sexual development before the changes take them by surprise. Children who have not been informed before they experience these changes often worry for fear something is wrong with them. The young child who matures early may have special need for information, with reassurance that he is normal and the changes natural.

Most boys and girls in the 9 to 12, or prepubertal age group, are uninterested or even antagonistic toward children of the opposite sex. Romantic boy-girl attachments are scorned, although boys and girls may pay each other a good deal of rather unfavorable attention as they make clear that they have no use for each other! Of course this is not always the case; some boys and girls of this age are good friends. In the prepubertal years, the story of reproduction can be told objectively, without going into the emotional problems that are of interest to older boys and girls who have begun dating.

Among the nine to twelves, the child's friends of his own age and sex may seem to be of first importance in his life. The boy must dress like the gang, talk like the gang, do what the gang does, or life isn't worth living! The same is true of the girl and her girl friends. Girl friends are likely to become an important source of information about sex as about other matters, and the boy's gang is often the source of his vocabulary of sex terms. Yet the children still look to

father and mother as the source of authoritative information, especially if it has been the family custom for parents and children to talk about sex, as they do about many matters.

Father and mother must be on hand to give these children security and the knowledge that they are loved, for boys and girls as yet are taking only rather tentative flutters toward independence. The example of father and mother or a trusted teacher or scout leader remains a strong influence on their attitudes, including attitudes about sex.

Curiosity About Sex

Although boys and girls of 9 to 12 years are not usually interested in each other, they are not necessarily uninterested in sex. Often their curiosity about sex is strong, especially if their questions have not been adequately answered. By this time, they need to know about both the mother's and the father's parts in reproduction.

The wide range of the questions about sex among children of these ages, most of whom are in the fourth to seventh grades, is suggested by reports of the questions they ask under circumstances when they feel free to speak out. The extent of their questions is shown, for example, in a school where with the parents' enthusiastic backing, the film, "Human Growth,"* has been shown annually to sixth grade boys and girls for some years.

Each year, the parents viewed the film before it was shown to the children, and parents and teachers together discussed its use at school and ways in which parents could follow up the showing of the film with discussions at home. The children knew that their parents had seen and approved the film, and wanted them to see it. However, parents did not attend the showing to the children.

The teacher prepared herself in advance by special reading, and also prepared the children in advance by talking with them about human growth and some of the topics covered in the film. Certain books were made available to the children, also. The film was shown in the children's own familiar classroom situation, with their own teacher in charge. Afterwards, she encouraged them to ask questions, and the questions came freely. On one or two occasions when the children asked for information the teacher was not prepared to give,

*Human Growth. 16 mm. sound color. 19 minutes. University of Oregon Medical School. For rental sources, apply to E. C. Brown Trust, 220 S.W. Alder Street, Portland, Oregon 97204.

a physician was invited to attend a second session, and was introduced to the class as a doctor who could help in answering their questions.

For a number of years, the teachers kept records of the questions asked by the children in the discussion period following the showing of the film. The following brief report shows the wide coverage of the questions and suggests that a number of them, especially of those about birth, may have been prompted by worry about matters that the children understood dimly or not at all. A list of the questions asked was sent each year to the parents to enable them to follow the class discussion by talking about the questions with their own children if they so desired. Parents and teachers have agreed, however, that the teacher should be free to give a correct answer to all the questions asked in the class discussion following the film.

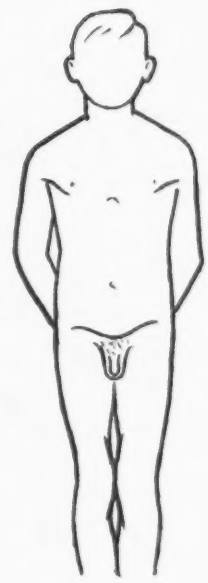
The children asked many more questions about birth than about any other phase of reproduction and always had many questions about illness or death of the mother or baby, as well as questions about normal processes. "Does a baby kick when it is born? Is this the cause of the pain at birth?" "In a normal birth, is it necessary for the doctor to give an anesthetic to the mother?" "How does the doctor help the child out at birth, and where does it come out?" "A mother gets sick during labor, doesn't she?" "What happens if the baby dies inside the mother?" "What happens if the baby comes out after three months?" "What happens to the cord after the baby is born?" "Why do some people have to have babies by cesarean operation?" "If the woman is sick, does the baby die?" "When you are about to have a baby, do they put you in bed with the covers over you or what? I saw a picture, the woman was in a bed with iron sides on it, and the lady tossed and turned." "A baby in the paper last night weighed one and one half pounds. Will it live?" "Why is it during the birth of a child the woman sometimes dies?"

In the film, illness and death are not associated with birth, or even mentioned, but the showing of the film gave the children the chance to ask questions that may have worried them for some time.

Many questions were asked about twins and other multiple births, about prenatal development of the baby, about egg cells and sperm cells, about the comparative growth of boys and girls.

And of course there were questions about parenthood and mating. "What makes people want to mate instead of adopt babies?"

"What if a couple want a baby real bad and can't have them?" "Can a woman have a baby at any age?" "What is it called when a woman not married has a baby?" "How does mating take place?" Telling of a group of pupils who asked the teacher this question after class, the teacher reported, "The group was very serious and intent upon having a clear, definite description of the mating process. There was no sign of embarrassment. When they understood what they wished to know, they thanked the teacher and went out to play."

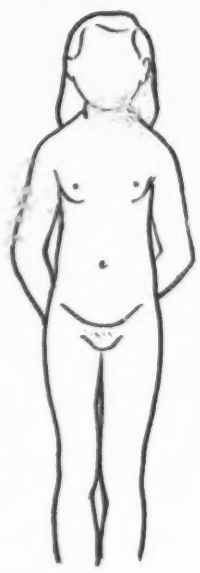


While many of the questions were stimulated by the film itself, many others obviously grew out of some incident or experience that a child knew about, which had not been explained to his satisfaction. Often, a clear, simple, factual answer to such a question will prevent preoccupation with sex from ballooning to unwholesome proportions or will allay a child's fears.

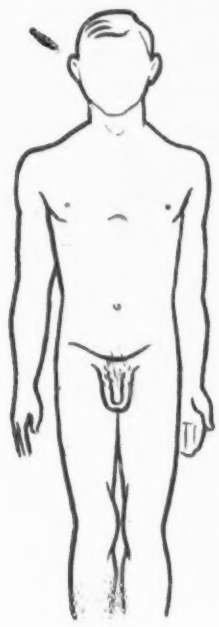
The experiences reported in the school described above would not necessarily be duplicated in other schools. If home and school are to share the responsibility for sex education, the plan that is worked out should be suited to the particular school and community.

In the school described, the showing of the film is only one part of a cooperative program worked out by parents, teachers, and the school administrators. This program aims to provide for the child a continuous opportunity to learn about human health and growth, from kindergarten on through the grades.

Parents and teachers have agreed that both school and home have an essential role to play in helping children learn the basic facts about human growth, including those about sex. Without minimizing the responsibility of parents, they have agreed that the children benefit when some of their learning comes through group situations at school, as well as in the privacy of intimate parent-child discussions. It is their experience that what the group learns together tends to decrease unwholesome secretiveness, curiosity, and gossip among the children.



The use of any one film, of course, would be less effective in a school where the showing was an isolated attempt at sex education, instead of a part of a planned program extending through much of the child's school life. Neither would a film be used so successfully in a school where parents and teachers did not work together in the program. In some communities where there has been opposition to the use of films on human reproduction, or where they have been



used unsuccessfully, the reasons may lie in the lack of full cooperation between parents and school or in the lack of a long-term program of sex education in which the use of the film is one part that has a suitable place.

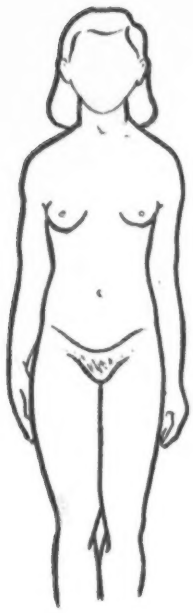
Children are bound to have questions about sex. It is ideal if parents can answer them, but many parents feel that they do not have the resources, and they want the help of school, church, or community.

If you are the parent of a child of 9 to 12 years, you may want to give him the pamphlet in this series called "A Story About You," written for this group. By reading it yourself at the same time, you may be able to bring the subjects it discusses into your conversations with your child, to make it easier for him to ask questions. Or you and your child may enjoy reading it together.

PART 3: THE YEARS FROM 12 to 15

Physical Development

Most boys enter the period of increased growth in height and weight (described on page 37) during these years although, as has been said, it begins earlier in some boys. In other boys, the spurt of growth begins toward the end of this period, while in some boys it even begins after the age of fifteen. The secondary sex characteristics also usually develop during these years.



Many boys experience their first ejaculation of semen at about fourteen, although it may be a year or two earlier or later. Even when boys have learned earlier about ejaculations, some of them worry when they wake in the morning to find that they have had an ejaculation of semen during the night. Such occurrences are normal, however, and are called seminal emissions, nocturnal emissions, or wet dreams. Normal boys differ widely in the frequency of such emissions, and some boys do not have them. Although they are not abnormal, if emissions take place several times or more a week, there may be too much sexual stimulation in a boy's life and not enough of the normal physical activities and mental interests that boys need. Boys should know in advance about the bodily changes of sexual development, including these emissions.

Since girls usually begin their period of rapid growth somewhere from 9 to 12; many of them already will be tapering off in speed of their growth in height and weight when they enter these years. It

is not uncommon for girls to reach their full height by 15 or 16.

The secondary sex characteristics have begun to appear in most girls of this age group (see page 38). Most girls begin to menstruate at about 13, and relatively few have not menstruated by the age of 15. The beginning of menstruation is an important event, and girls of this age have many questions about it. They want to know what it feels like; whether there are things they cannot do during their period; where the flow comes from; what it is for; how old they will be before they stop menstruating; how to wear sanitary pads; whether they may wear tampons. Many mothers will wish to consult their family physician about the latter question, since he may determine whether tampons are suited to the girl's needs and, if so, give her instructions in their use.

If you are a parent, especially a mother, or if you are a teacher, or if you work with girls of the early teens in a youth organization, you soon will discover that they need your help in realizing that menstruation is a natural process, not an illness. Some girls have no difficulty, although a small amount of discomfort is common. If there is severe discomfort, the girl should see her family physician. Most girls are able to carry on their usual activities during menstruation, although it is advisable to avoid those that are especially strenuous or fatiguing, or that expose the girl to being chilled, particularly during the early part of the period.

One of the most worrisome experiences of puberty and adolescence to many boys and girls is a siege of pimples or blackheads, which physicians speak of as acne. This condition often causes an unhappy self-consciousness that interferes seriously with the social relationships of the boy or girl. Perhaps one of the best reasons why a teenager should see the family physician if acne is persistent is that the doctor may reassure him that such complexion troubles are a part of his growing up, that something probably can be done to improve the condition, and that the acne is likely to disappear in time. With this assurance, the boy or girl may follow the physician's instructions about diet, care of the skin, and other health habits with an easier mind about the final outcome.

Another phase of development that may be troublesome in these years of rapid growth is the physical awkwardness that may accompany the changing relative proportions of arms, legs, and trunk. The considerate adult will not emphasize the moments when, all arms and legs, the gangling youngster stumbles or knocks over the flowers.

In fact, the frequency of such moments is probably exaggerated; possibly they occur most often when young people do not feel at ease. If you watch them in the games and sports in which they are at home—on the diving float, or the tennis courts, or on their bicycles—you'll probably envy their skill and grace! Those are the moments to help them remember! This is reason, too, to encourage them to make good use of the school's physical education program, or other opportunities to gain skill in sports, active games, or dancing.

Boys and girls of these ages may be greatly concerned about their changing bodies, and whether they are normal, especially if they are not developing at the same rate as their friends. They often need assurance that their differences from other boys or girls do not mean that there is anything wrong with them.

Masturbation

Along with the maturing of the reproductive organs, there comes an upsurge of sexual feelings. Masturbation—manipulation of the sex organs aimed at physical gratification—becomes common, especially in boys, although it also occurs frequently in girls.

It is now known that masturbation occurs at some time or other in the majority of children, and that it does not cause insanity or bodily harm. In extreme cases where a child seems to be masturbating continually or frequently, the advice of a physician or child guidance clinic should be sought, for the masturbation may be the symptom of some deep-seated unhappiness. In this connection, it should be remembered, however, that the anxiety of a parent about this can increase the child's problem.

Parents will be most helpful to the young child in this connection if they provide a happy, relaxed, loving home atmosphere, with a daily routine that offers the child interesting and absorbing things to do, while it avoids situations that might encourage masturbation. They should not shame or punish the child for it, threaten him with dreadful consequences, or confine him in any way to try to stop him from touching his genitals.

Parents or teachers who observe masturbation in a child in their care might well ask themselves whether he has been put under undue strain, perhaps by striving to achieve what is beyond his ability, or otherwise has been forced to find satisfaction within himself rather than in his daily life experiences with others. They may also consider whether there has been too much enforced inactivity

in his life, and whether he has had enough opportunity for satisfying play activities.

In general, if adults are able to understand masturbation as a stage in child development that will pass, they can be more relaxed in dealing with it.

Adults need to remember that with boys and girls in the teens, as with younger children, the most serious damage from masturbation rises from feelings of shame and guilt about it. The teen-ager who asks his parents or some other older person about it should be given straight answers: It is very common among young people. It does not cause insanity or bodily harm. Most people get over the practice as they grow older.

Sex problems are not usually troublesome to a young person when he lives a healthy, satisfying life, when his days are full of useful, interesting activities, including vigorous sports that give healthy outlets for physical energies, and when he has plenty of interesting work, good friends and good fun.

Parents and other adults can help most by making it possible for boys and girls to have such a life and to meet problems day by day as they arise, without letting tensions accumulate. The happy, friendly, well-informed teen-ager who knows that he can count on his parents' love and support is not likely to have serious sex problems. Such young people can realize that the sexual aspects of life can bring great happiness in married love and family life, and that it is part of growing up to learn to manage sex impulses so that they may be a force for good and for happiness.

They Struggle to Find Themselves

The early teens are years in which the young teen-ager struggles to find himself, as he is growing up. He often selects some favored older person as a model of personality and appearance, and tries to make himself over in the image of his ideal. The model is not likely to be father or mother, because the boy or girl is seeking greater independence from parents now. He may choose some one whom he knows, as the athletic coach, a teacher, favorite club leader, or a young college man or woman, or he may choose some distant ideal, as a movie star, scientist, band leader, or athlete.

Sometimes it is obviously impossible for the young person to form himself into anything like a copy of his model, even though the

model may be admirable. At other times, the model is distinctly undesirable. When a young person in your family, or school, or group, has chosen an unsuitable hero, you can help him most by realizing that he is striving to create a self that is admirable. You can help him to appreciate his own good points, and develop his own special talents, while he learns to accept his limitations. He may need tactful help in improving his own appearance, manners, speech, or dress, or he may need some special experience for the development of his personality—perhaps going to camp, or instruction in some special accomplishment. As for the hero—the young boy or girl probably will move on to another one before long, as he makes his own discovery that the one he has chosen is not, after all, the ideal he is seeking.

At this age, boys and girls have changing values. What they admire this year, they may discard the next. For example, one study showed that seventh-grade pupils preferred girls who were lady-like, tidy and friendly, while "tom-boys" were not much admired. By the ninth grade, the popular girl was the one who was a good sport and very active socially. Seventh-grade boys were most acceptable when they were daring and active in games, with a rather rough, untidy appearance, but in the ninth grade untidiness was criticized, although skill and courage still won admiration. (Tryon, Caroline M.: *The Adolescent Peer Culture,* in Henry, Nelson B., (editor), National Society for the Study of Education. Forty-third yearbook, Part I, Adolescence. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.)

The changes in values reflect the march toward being grown-up that is so important for boys and girls in their teens. And they reflect the fact that it is not just your boy or girl marching alone—but marching with all his friends of the same age. At home or school, adults have the final word, and this gives young people the common bond of striving for increasing freedom from adult controls. When teen-agers are about their own affairs, therefore, they create a world of their own in which *their* word is the law determining what "is done" by the young person who is acceptable to the group.

"Mother! They'll think I'm a freak if I have to be home at half past nine!" or "Everybody goes there, simply everybody! Why can't I?" or "Nobody wears a hat!" or "I'd rather be dead!" Every parent can add his own list of the passionate outcries of sons and daughters who say that they would rather perish than be different from their friends, for freedom at this age does not yet mean freedom to be different from one's group.

The young teen-ager must feel that he belongs, that he is accepted. To him, belonging and being accepted by his own age group are of immeasurable importance. Therefore, the answer to the question, "What must I do to be popular with my group?" may be crucial in its effect on his conduct. Nowadays, even among boys and girls of the earlier teens, this question may involve such other questions as "Must I pet to be popular?" "When do you stop?" or "How far can you go?"

Fear that young people will make unwise decisions in answering these questions about sex conduct is often behind the reluctance of father, mother, educator, or group worker to grant to their teen-agers the freedom the young people demand.

Adults can feel more confidence that young people will have the inner resources to find good solutions to these questions if boys and girls have grown up in homes and schools where moral standards are respected and where adults support young people in a belief in such values as integrity, courage, kindness, honesty, generosity, justice, and fair play, that are fundamental in good human relationships.

Such a background is necessary, but it may not be enough. Young teen-agers need specific help in developing sound attitudes about sex conduct. It is part of their groping for independence that sometimes they rebel against social conventions. They do not yet have enough experience to know how the sex conduct of their teens may affect their happiness in marriage. And so they need the factual information about sex that lies back of the standards which adults sometimes insist upon without explanation. And they need guidance in applying standards of ethics to relations between the sexes. Sometimes they will accept this guidance either in group discussions or private conversations from a teacher, church leader, or group worker in a youth organization when they will not accept it from parents.

Boys and girls from 12 to 15 years are almost never ready for complete freedom from adult controls. Actually, they feel more secure if adults have set reasonable boundaries. This is especially likely to be true when the boundaries have been developed as the result of free discussion between the young people and responsible adults. (See page 51 for a discussion of codes.) Clear understanding of the bounds of behavior is certainly important in situations where boys and girls are together, whether the setting is the home, school, or youth center.

Young people do not learn to act with complete freedom all at once. Adults have the delicate task of granting as much freedom and responsibility as the boys and girls can use safely, without letting them be harmed by the immaturity of their actions. Adult guidance and controls should diminish gradually as young people become more responsible.

They will not learn to carry big responsibilities all at once. For example, in a community where a new youth center was opening, teen-agers were invited to help in planning the program from the beginning. At the first meeting, their chief contribution to planning was to ask for social rooms where lights were low, and no adults were present. With more experience, they later faced up to such practical problems as scheduling the use of the game equipment so that all could have a fair turn in using it; what the closing hours should be; and what to do when a tough gang from another neighborhood came to the center. They learned, among other things, what their own responsibilities were in these problems as distinct from those of the staff and other supervising adults, and they discovered that the efforts of both youth and grown people were needed to make the project a success.

When Dating Begins

It is not always easy for young people in the early teens to learn to get along with the other sex. There may be many heartaches and many ups and downs. Both boys and girls worry about "not having dates" and wish they were more popular, but dating is also important to young people because their future success in choosing a marriage partner depends to some degree upon learning how to get along with the other sex.

Each boy and girl has his own pace in developing interest in the other sex; some begin to have dates very early, but others may not be interested until they are past their teens. The more socially mature boys and girls in junior high school will be interested in having dates and going to dances, but in some junior high schools as many as half of the ninth grade boys have no interest in dating. Girls are likely to be interested in dating and dancing a year or so earlier than boys. Differences are normal, and it is unwise to keep comparing a boy or girl with his friends and urging him to go and do likewise.

Even though your teen-ager may be impatient if you express

concern about his dates, there are ways for adults to help him and his friends. Individual parents, as well as schools and community agencies, can make it possible for boys and girls to acquire skill in activities, such as tennis, swimming or square dancing that help young people to be considered desirable companions by their group.

You can provide meeting places where boys and girls can be together under desirable circumstances. The first of such places is the child's own home, where the parents' genuine welcome may be the most important element in making the home attractive to young friends of the children of the house.

Schools have learned that they can help boys and girls learn how to get along together through such school activities as hobby groups, orchestra and choral groups, student councils, school papers, and dramatic clubs, for example. Some schools sponsor dances or other social events, such as a monthly open house with games and dancing for the entire family.

Many organizations, such as churches or the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A., also provide a meeting place and program through which young people get to know and understand each other.

Although there is no set time-table of dating that will apply to all young people, it is quite common for boys and girls to have dates as a group before they begin to date in pairs. Parents and youth leaders often wish to encourage this type of dating among the younger teens.

Parents and other counselors may be troubled when young teen-agers begin to "go steady." There is no one answer to the question whether this custom is good or bad. As a rule, the teen-age years should bring opportunity to young people to know a considerable number of friends of the other sex, so that experience enables the young man or woman, in time, to choose friends and eventually a marriage partner with wisdom. If "going steady" means that the young boy or girl is confined to the company of one friend, and particularly the first friend of the other sex, for a long time, it is often unwise.

However, in some communities, the teen-ager who does not "go steady" is likely to be left out of social activities and to lose out on making friends for that reason. In other places "going steady," among young teen-agers, is not a very serious or a very steady matter, and partners change rather often. Parents and youth leaders must take their stand in the light of what seems best for the social

development of the particular boys and girls in their care, according to the situation in their own community. Parents need to be very sure they are right before they insist that their child should be different from all his friends.

There are many questions about dating that can best be answered by the joint consideration of the problem by youth and adults. Many of these are family questions, to be solved by parents and the young people of the family together as equitably as possible. Who is responsible for the expense of entertainment when your boy takes a girl out? What places are permitted, and what places are out of bounds? Who shall have the use of the living room on Saturday night? Who shall use the family car on such and such dates? Where families have the habit of taking counsel together, the questions may be solved more satisfactorily than where decisions are arbitrary.

Many of the questions revolving around the social activities of young people can be resolved more satisfactorily if a neighborhood or community tackles them together. Since doing what the crowd does is so important to a teen-ager, being different may be so painful that the youngster prefers to disobey adult authority. If adults and leaders among the young people can agree on a proper course of action, such a conflict may be avoided.

In a number of communities, parents, teachers, and young people have worked together on the preparation of a code of conduct to which all could agree. Codes have covered such points of difficulty as the closing hours of social events for boys and girls in different grades and for both mid-week and week-end occasions; agreement that adults should be present and available when young people entertain; that there should be sufficient lighting at all times at parties; that there should be no "party crashing"; agreements about transportation to and from social events in relation to safe driving; agreements to respect property; agreement that alcoholic beverages should not be served at youth parties; family agreements that all members should make information available so that they can be reached at any time in case of emergency, and many other points.

There is no magic about such codes, and they do not relieve adults of their responsibilities. Teen-agers only gradually achieve enough maturity to govern their own actions and while they are growing up they need the safeguard of knowing that adults are willing to be firm when restrictions are necessary.

One of the most conspicuous facts about the early teens is the

great differences in development found among boys and girls of those ages. Some remain children, both physically and socially, all through these years. Some, who are children at 12, by 15 have reached nearly their full growth and are having dates or even falling in love. In unfavorable circumstances, boys and girls of this age may become involved in serious sex problems, including pregnancy and all the accompanying heartbreak, both for the young girl and boy and their parents. Some young girls in these circumstances risk health and even life by going to an abortionist. Adults will need to tailor their efforts at sex education to the needs of the particular boys and girls in their care. Another pamphlet in this series, called "Finding Yourself," has been written with the needs of young teenagers in mind, including some of the problems of the more mature boys and girls of this group.

PART 4: OLDER YOUTH 16 to 21

Young people from 16 to 21 are considered to be young adults. In these years, most young people reach full height and complete their physical growth. As a rule, they have reached sexual maturity before entering this period, so far as the physical devolpment of reproductive organs is concerned. Sex urges are likely to be at their peak in young men.

The experience and life circumstances of young people in the late teens and early twenties vary widely. Some are already self-supporting, married, and raising a family, many while still in college. In fact, the average age of marriage now is a few months over twenty years for young women and about a year older for young men. There are many marriages in the teens. However, many other youth in their late teens and early twenties are going to school, or working while living with their parents, or else attending school away from home and preparing for a chosen vocation, or serving in the armed forces.

Young people must make increasingly important decisions as they pass through this period, and they should be encouraged to make them with increasing independence as they develop the capacity for mature judgment. Perhaps you are among the fortunate parents whose sons and daughters at this age continue to turn to you for counsel and to take you into their confidence, although they prefer to make their own decisions and do so rather well. This con-

sultation is more likely to happen if, through the earlier years, your children have learned that their opinion has a valued place in family deliberations. It may happen in a different way if they are overly dependent on you and have too little self-confidence.

However, your nearly grown sons and daughters may still need to prove their independence to themselves and you. If they are critical of you, or if they turn to other adults to discuss their problems, you need not feel that you have failed them as parents. Young people usually need and often welcome the widening of adult relationships that comes from discussing their concerns with respected teachers, group leaders, or other older friends outside the family.

As parents, youth leaders, or teachers, you will want to keep in mind that you need to trust your young people, for they are away from home "on their own" much of the time. You need also to tolerate much conduct that is part of youth's development, although adults do not like it.

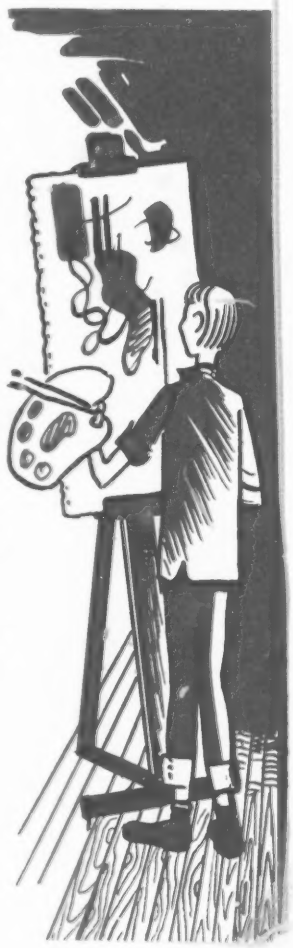
Young adults who live at home also need to know that their parents welcome their friends when they bring them home. This need is as important for young adults as for younger boys and girls.

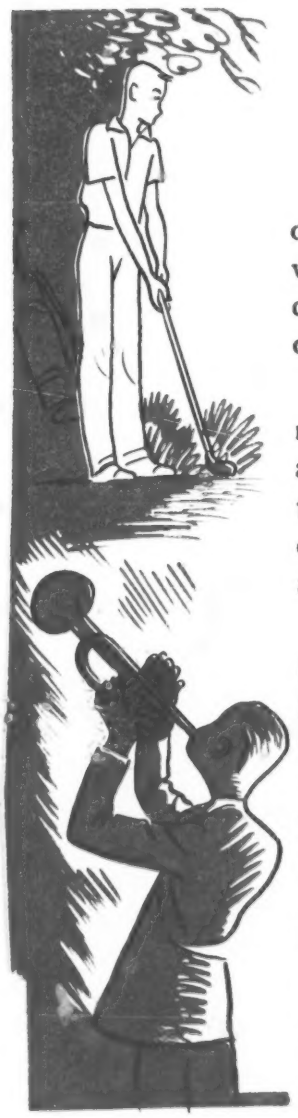
New hobbies and interests are constantly appearing and adults may expect them. In fact, they should welcome them, for the variety enlarges the young person's experiences. Youth leaders need to remember, in planning their programs, that the interests of their group will change. In the home, there must be an understanding about who will bear the expense of the changing hobbies or interests.

A frequent matter of concern to parents—perhaps you share it—is the tendency of young people to be absent from home without the parents' knowledge of where they are. In families where adults come and go with no communication about where they are or when they will return, they may naturally expect young people to follow the same pattern. In many homes, it is expected as a matter of common courtesy that all members of the family make sure that some one at home knows their whereabouts.

And if your sons and daughters are in this age group, you may need to be reminded that the older teens and young adults soon will leave home to start their own families. You will not want to be possessive, but you will need to develop ways of keeping a rewarding family relationship after they leave.

Sex education, of course, should have begun long before young people reach this age. It should continue now with consideration





of matters that particularly concern this age group, although there will be many young people who now consider their sex education complete and will not bother to seek further information. Many others will welcome further guidance.

The late teens and early twenties are years when many young men and women fall in love, years when questions of sexual conduct are urgent. Young people must make decisions about how intimate they will be. Knowing that some youth indulge in premarital intercourse, they are faced with decisions about their own course of action.

There can be much valuable preparation for marriage at this age, if youth have opportunities to discuss and learn what is necessary for a successful marriage. Many young people need to grow beyond their rather immature preoccupation with the glamorous aspects of being engaged. They need to learn, before marriage, that its happiness and permanence can be strengthened if the young marriage partners are able to make adjustments about such matters as finances, jobs, relationships with each other's friends and relatives, and planning ahead for a family. Some young people need to learn that sex adjustments, important as they are, are not the whole of happiness in marriage. Others may need to face up to the difficulties that may develop when there are great differences between husband and wife in age, religion, or background. Young people also will be fortunate, if in these years, they achieve a greater understanding of themselves and the wellsprings of their own relationships with other people.

Young men and women need some flexibility in their ideas of what is the proper role of women and of men. Nowadays, when so many women work because they need to do so, both the young man and the young woman should be able to think clearly about how this affects the relationship of husband and wife and how a young wife may be a successful mother if she works.

During these years youth are exploring, probing, accepting and rejecting ideas of right and wrong; examining their religious convictions, and standards and codes of behavior. They will be helped to reach mature, valid conclusions if they consider the facts and principles involved in such matters as those suggested above. It is well that high schools and colleges are offering an increasing number of courses in family life education. Churches and youth organizations can render valuable service by offering programs where

youth can discuss relationships between the sexes, marriage, and family life. Many of these matters are discussed in another pamphlet in this series, "Approaching Adulthood," written for young people of about 16 to 21 years.

While many young adults may seem to shirk responsibility, many others are self-sufficient and capable and are building the kind of life that will make them happy and successful parents.

PART 5: WHEN SPECIAL HELP IS NEEDED

Perhaps you have wondered at times whether the children in your care were really normal, for the whims and notions of even the most normal children sometimes seem bizarre to older people!

If you are concerned about the normality of sex conduct, it may be helpful to realize that the individual who has good physical, mental, and emotional health is always able to make healthy sexual adjustments. And if a child seems to have difficulties, it is often illuminating to find out whether he has any health problem. The family is fortunate which enjoys the services of an understanding physician who has watched the children grow up. Then he can reassure parents that certain problems will be outgrown or decide that others need attention. Some communities have child guidance centers, where children with emotional problems may be helped, but many more such facilities are needed.

Of course, you should not conclude that a child is abnormal, merely because he is different, whether the difference is in height and weight or in sexual development or conduct. This pamphlet and others in this series have repeatedly pointed out that wide variations may be expected in healthy sexual growth and behavior.

A child or youth whose sexual behavior presents serious problems is likely to have other emotional difficulties, too. The promiscuous adolescent, for example, is not usually in trouble just about sex; often he is in difficulty because basic emotional needs have not been satisfied, as when his parents do not give him enough love, or he is failing to achieve any of the recognition which he needs and wants.

The child who needs special help may sometimes give you a clue if his behavior seems to be quite unsuitable for his age and stage of development, although you cannot anticipate on a year-by-year basis just what a child should do. It may be easier to recognize faulty sexual development in a physical way than to know when the child

has a mental or emotional problem about sex. There may be such a physical problem, for example, when testes do not descend or when a girl has not menstruated by the late teens.

At some stage in his life, nearly every child quite normally prefers friends of his or her own sex. This is likely to be true in the several years just before or during the earlier teens. Such young friends may experience a fine and loyal devotion to each other.

However, a same-sex friendship sometimes develops into a "crush," in which all other friends are jealously excluded. Occasionally the two young friends fall into the same kind of fondling and embracing that accompany sexual relations. As a rule, they outgrow the relationship and move on to an interest in the opposite sex, although unfortunately this is not always the case.

For this reason, young people need to understand that an intense, exclusive friendship with the same sex may keep a boy or girl from developing into a young adult who is able to fall in love and marry. The term "homosexual" is usually applied when friends of the same sex express their attachment in caresses of a sexual nature.

In any large community, there are likely to be adults who seek out young boys or girls to establish a homosexual relationship. Responsible men and women should be aware of this problem and should protect the children and youth in their care by appropriate instruction. For the little child, the customary instructions against talking or going away with strangers may be enough, or a warning may be added to stay away from places known to be unsafe for children or from lonely places when the child is by himself.

Older boys and girls will need a fuller explanation of homosexuality. Occasionally youth may be approached by a homosexual adult who occupies a respected place in the community. Such a situation is difficult, but young people can be advised to avoid all situations when they are likely to be alone with the individual. Young people need to know that such things do happen and what to do in such an event, but warnings should avoid creating a general attitude of fear and distrust.

Chapter 5

SOME WAYS OF LEARNING ABOUT SEX

Keeping Lines of Communication Open

Although modern life is not always conducive to leisurely talk, some of the best opportunities for sex education may be found in unhurried conversations between adults and children or young people. Such discussions about sex are most likely to develop if the younger generation has discovered that it is easy to exchange ideas with mother or dad or with this teacher or that club leader; perhaps with the family doctor or a friendly minister. If young folk have learned that parents or older friends always have time to talk about the new puppies next door, or shooting stars, or who won the swimming races, or what friends are "going steady" now, they are likely to feel free also to ask their questions about sex. Always provided, of course, that they haven't been "shushed" or embarrassed for doing so.

Perhaps you know certain people who have never learned that good conversation is a two-way street; when they are on the scene, all the talk seems to flow from one direction! Even adults who give other adults the courtesy of a listening ear sometimes take over the conversation with children and youth to such an extent that the ideas of the young people are never expressed.

This is especially unfortunate from the point of view of sex education, since it is necessary for adults to know what puzzles children and what young people are thinking. With young children, it is important to hear about the fantasies that often persist even when sound information has been given them—for example, when a child keeps believing that he was born through the navel, or was adopted, though he has been told the truth.

As has been pointed out, youth in their teens may need guidance in reaching decisions about sex conduct. At this age, when they are testing and often challenging the ideas of their elders, young people need to know adults who will listen to their views and discuss them on their merits instead of dismissing them on the grounds that "older people know best."

In guiding the sex education of children or youth, you need to learn to listen, not only to what they say, but to what they do not say. "My little girl never asks about sex," some parents may observe. Possibly her curiosity has been satisfied by what playmates have told her, or by conversation she has overheard. How will her parents know what peculiar misinformation she may have accepted, unless they make it easy for her to talk with them?

"This group of junior high school youngsters showed no interest in the family life education materials when a committee of young folks sat in with our church school teachers in choosing the units of study for next year. I don't know why—those units are usually in demand," said the director of religious education in a large church. There could be a dozen explanations; the teachers and youth leaders may find the reason why, if ears are tuned to listen, if the channels of communication run two ways.

Learning Through the Experiences of Daily Life

The experiences of daily life are full of incidents which alert adults can utilize in meaningful sex education. A few such occasions are listed here with suggestions about how they may be used. It is well to remember that the child's stage of development governs to a considerable extent what he learns from his daily experiences and the kinds of experiences he seeks out.

New baby in the home or neighborhood

Parents may encourage other children in the family to help care for the new baby, according to their ability, as in dressing, diapering him, or preparing his bottle if he is bottle-fed. Thus children learn something about the loving care a baby needs; about the anatomy of the other sex if the baby's sex differs from theirs; about breast feeding if the mother nurses the baby. Before and after the baby's birth, parents may find many opportunities for discussing the baby's prenatal development and birth, in as much or little detail as is suited to the child's understanding. This can be done also if there is a new baby in a neighbor's home.

Teachers of kindergarten and primary grade children are often given the news of a new baby at home. This may be the occasion for talking about the kind of care a baby needs. The children are likely also to express their views about where the baby came from, making it necessary for the teacher to say that a baby grows inside his mother before he is born. This situation is easier for the teacher if she knows the parents and has an understanding with them about how such a situation is to be handled.

Observing other people bathing, toileting

Preschool children who see little children of the other sex in natural situations, such as taking a bath, undressing together, or urinating in a different manner, can usually accept their differences easily if parents and nursery school

teachers answer questions in a simple, matter-of-fact way. "Little boys have a penis through which they urinate. Little girls have a tiny opening instead." A lecture on reproduction is not needed to give such a simple explanation.

Children at four or five or older may begin to insist on privacy. The question is often asked, "Should children see their parents nude?" A family which is informal in its way of life usually lapses easily into informality in sharing bedrooms and bathrooms. If such experiences become exciting or disturbing to a child, more privacy is advisable. Certainly the result might be unfortunate if a strictly formal family that had always insisted that covering be worn and that bathroom doors be closed were suddenly to decide that children should see parents nude. If by accident, a child comes upon a personal situation to which he has been unaccustomed, such as seeing parents nude, the situation should be accepted calmly in order to avoid making it overly important to the child.

The teen-age boy who is slow in maturing may refuse to undress before other boys in the shower room or refuse to go swimming with them, because he is ashamed of his lack of development. This is an opportunity for the coach, physical education teacher, group leader, or parent to reassure him that he is not abnormal; that there is nothing wrong about being a late grower.

Taking care of pets

Through watching or taking care of farm animals or pets, children may acquire useful sex information, whether the observation is done at home, at school, or as a club project. Of course it is not enough for them to know only about animals, many of which mate in the most casual fashion. For complete understanding, the child needs the story of human reproduction with its setting of the love of parents for each other and their children.

When children use "those words" about sex

A young child of four or five or a little older may bring home objectionable words because some older boys use them, or because his own little group is sounding them out. With somewhat older children they may be a badge of belonging to the "gang." Such words often disappear from a vocabulary as suddenly as they came into it; unless they are forbidden, their usefulness will soon have been served. Some parents make it a practice to ask children to bring home all the new words they hear and to decide together which ones are all right to use.

Children need a vocabulary that enables them to talk about sex and to ask their questions about sex easily. If from an early age they hear adults use the correct terms for parts of the body in a natural, matter-of-fact way, the children too will learn the correct terms.

The use of the vernacular sometimes presents a problem for those who work with children in groups. The group leader may point out in a natural way that there will be many occasions when they will want to know and use the correct terms. He or she may then make some suggestions. With some groups, the teacher or group leader must use the vernacular to be understood or to establish a relationship in which he has the confidence of the group.

Marriage of an older brother or sister

The marriage of an older brother or sister may be the occasion for helping the younger children to learn something of the more serious meaning of marriage and establishing a new home, over and beyond the excitement of the wedding. If you are the father or mother of the bride, you may need to make quite an effort, however, to find the leisurely companionship with the younger children that makes such discussions possible!

Observing a pregnant woman

Older children sometimes make sly remarks or titter or look embarrassed when they observe a pregnant woman, perhaps a teacher, club leader, or a clerk in a store. The alert adult will try to help the children to have an easier attitude. "It looks as if she might have the baby pretty soon, doesn't it? Do you know how many days it takes for a baby to develop before it is ready to be born? Baby rabbits need only a month." Some such remark shows that the older person, too, is interested and willing to talk about babies.

Discovery of personal equipment

Sometimes children come upon personal hygiene equipment at home, or in stores or restrooms and ask questions. Children of three or so do not need detailed explanations. If a child of that age asks about sanitary pads he may be told that they are useful supplies, like the gauze or bandaids that he has seen at home. In speaking to an older child who is able to understand menstruation, it is better to speak of these supplies as "sanitary pads," or "napkins" rather than bandages to avoid giving the impression that the mother is ill when she uses them. The older child's questions about these supplies may be the occasion for giving information about menstruation.

Finding sex objects in the child's possession

It is fairly common for parents, teachers, or youth leaders to discover sex objects in the child's possession—sensational sex publications, sex comics, vulgar or suggestive pictures or toys, or other objects.

This situation requires a good deal of common sense in the adults who deal with it. It may indicate unsatisfied and therefore intensified curiosity about sex; or a need to be admired by "the gang" for being sophisticated; or that such objects are so common and easy to obtain in the neighborhood that almost any boy or girl might have them. What should be done will depend upon the circumstances. As a rule, it will be wise to make sure that reliable information about sex is made available to the young people through discussions, books, or films, in which the normal aspects of sex and family life are emphasized.

A representative group of citizens in a community may need to take action. It should not be just a few citizens who decide that something is bad. A committee organized as a part of a youth guidance group in a community assures a representative membership of social workers, church leaders, parents, educators, as well as representatives from the courts and the police. The problem of cleaning up news stands or other sources of pornography raises many questions about censorship, for when censorship once begins, one never knows where it will end. One is always faced with the question, "Who shall decide what young people should read?" Each community must work out its own problem, keeping in mind that the family is ultimately responsible, but that again it has the right to seek help from the various community groups.

Scrawls and scribbles in the toilet

Again, this situation needs common-sense handling. Like the previous situation, it also may be viewed as the occasion for introducing discussions, reading material, or films that emphasize the normal aspects of sex and family life. This may also be an opportunity to help boys and girls understand that pride in their school and respect for fellow pupils should keep them from defacing the toilets or other school property.

News stories, magazine articles, radio, moving pictures, television

Popular magazines read by old and young alike feature many serious articles about sex, as was pointed out on page 13. They cover many topics, such as "They Deliver Your Baby at Home," "Are You an RH Negative?" "Does Chastity Make Sense?" or "How Immoral are American Women?"

News stories told through newspapers, radio, television and moving pictures cover the birth of Siamese twins; or glandular treatment that changes a young man into a young woman; or tell how a woman with two complete organs of conception conceived separately in each and gave birth to babies three weeks apart; or headline the tale, "Boy in Love Saved from 5-story Leap"; or splash the front page with the horrible story, "Girl, 10, kidnapped, raped, murdered."

If adults form the habit of chatting with children or young people about news and current articles that they are likely to see, the adults may discover that the children have misinterpreted even the most carefully written article and may be able to clear up the misunderstanding. This custom of talking about the news and current reading may be an important safeguard in the case of sensational news stories about sex, for the fears that grow out of what is not understood may be very disturbing.

If a child already knows such facts about sex as he is able to understand, it is easier to answer his questions and dispel his fears than if he has been given no previous information. If his first introduction to knowledge of sex comes in relation to some shocking incident, it may be hard to give the idea that the sex side of life is usually normal and healthy.

Of course the answer that is given to a child's question about a news story should be one the child can understand. For example, the six-year-old child from the average home who asks what rape means probably could not understand a full explanation if it were given. It is enough to say that there are a few men who may be dangerous to little children and even to women and may hurt them; that this is a reason why children who are by themselves should not talk to strangers or go away with them. The child of ten or eleven, who is already informed about sex may be told that some men who do not have good ideas about sex may try to force a girl or a woman to have sexual relations. The child by this time should understand the normal place of sex in life so well that it is not unduly disturbing to know that there are such things as sex crimes, when they come to his attention in the news. Needless to say, adults should not exaggerate their importance to the child.

Learning to dance

Boys and girls are fortunate who can learn to dance in their own homes, at school, at their youth organization, or in other wholesome, supervised surroundings. Through dancing under those circumstances, they become accustomed to correct forms of contact with the other sex. Skill in dancing is usually an asset to a boy or girl in making friends of the other sex.

Clothes that "tease"

Adult leaders of girls' clubs, high school teachers, or parents, all may have opportunity to help young girls to understand that clothes that reveal or suggest too much may give boys the impression that the girl's conduct will be free and easy sexually. Many young girls have no conception of the urgency of the sexual impulses that young boys may experience and do not realize that clothes that "tease" may be disturbing to boys because of sexual feelings. In many organizations, girls ask for "charm classes" or discussions about how to be attractive, and such a program can easily cover this point. The current fashions must be considered, of course, in deciding what is good or poor taste in this respect.

The visit to the family physician

In families where children and young people are examined periodically by the family physician, especially if he has an opportunity to become counselor and friend, there may be many occasions during the child's life when the doctor can help in keeping his ideas and attitudes straight, with respect to reproduction and sexual development. In adolescence, he may be especially helpful in informing and reassuring young people about the normality of their development, about acne, seminal emissions, or menstruation. For young engaged couples about to be married, his guidance should be invaluable. He may be a part of a community marriage education program or may refer the young couple to a marriage counseling center if one is available, and he does not wish to be their counselor himself.

When children ask parents about birth control

When children ask their parents about birth control, the parents will answer, of course, in the light of their own convictions on the subject. Those whose religious beliefs lead them to think it wrong should give their reasons and make their position clear. Parents who believe that planning for the spacing of children enables them to have healthier and happier families should also make their reasons clear.

In either case, such a conversation may offer parents a chance to express their love for their children and their happiness in having them.

They also may find it wise to make clear that birth control methods prevent the union of sperm cell and egg cell, and thus keep a new life from beginning and that this is different from abortion, which means the termination of a pregnancy and therefore of a life that has already begun.

A Few Suggestions for School Programs

In *Health Education** (also a report of the Committee issuing this pamphlet), the statement is made that "Any school program of sex education should be developed in close cooperation with parents and parents' groups. It is essential that parents understand what is done and are willing that it be done. Invitations to assist will often result in helpful cooperation and yield surprisingly fruitful results."

This statement represents a most important development in sex education in schools. Perhaps such cooperation is more often developed in connection with a special project, such as showing a film, than in relation to planning a sex education program that is part of health education at all grade levels. If cooperation is successful in a special project, it may be extended to a wider program.

The following example tells about the cooperative planning of parents and teachers for the showing of a film concerning

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**Health Education*, a report of the Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education of the N. E. A. and the A. M. A. 1961 edition.

Menstruation,* to the girls in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in a school where there had been no other such program.

A letter to the mothers explained that the film showing was a PTA project, that the film would be previewed by the mothers, and that a permission slip must be signed before a girl would be admitted to the film showing. The planning group had decided to have the mothers and daughters see the film separately. They reasoned that the mothers might want to ask questions that could not be discussed before the girls, and some girls might not feel free to ask questions in the presence of others. The planning group had also previewed the film before deciding on the project —a very necessary step whenever sex education films are to be used.

The planning proved to be wise for this locality. The mothers asked about how and when to approach the subject of menstruation and sex education. The expert in family relations who showed the film explained about the early maturing of some girls and pointed out the need for giving information about menstruation early enough in a girl's life. She made it clear that she could not refuse to answer questions the girls might ask following the film showing. The mothers agreed that this was right, and that they hoped their daughters would bring up sex questions which they had been unable to introduce.

With the full backing of the mothers their daughters saw the film and received answers to all their questions. Many girls asked questions that revealed apprehensions. The speaker answered their questions reassuringly and closed with emphasis on the point that menstruation is a normal part of a healthy girl's life. The opinion was expressed that the film was "only a drop in the bucket in the total task of sex education. The real work is to give parents insight to do better the job we were trying to do." Many things can be done to supplement the sex education of the home, but no one pattern will be suitable for all communities, and

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*"The Story of Menstruation." 16 mm. Sound, color. 10 minutes. Association Films, 347 Madison Avenue, New York.

"Molly Grows Up." 16 mm. Sound, black and white. 15 minutes. Sponsored by Personal Products Corp., available from Medical Arts Productions, c/o Wilfred Mitchell, Ph.D., 850 W. Euclid Avenue, Stockton, California.

"Growing Girls." 16 mm. Sound, black and white. 13 minutes. Sponsored by Film Producers Guild of England, available from Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, 1150 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois.

no one community or school will do the same things as another.

When parents and teachers plan together for sex education, they discover that every level of health education, from kindergarten to college, provides useful opportunities for sex education and that many other phases of school life also may help the child to learn about sex and family life. In the pioneer years of interest in sex education, it was not uncommon for the chief emphasis to be on the biological facts of reproduction, but educators feel strongly today that sex education should be focused toward fuller, better home and family living.

Only a few school situations need be suggested where this is possible—from "playing house" in the kindergarten or caring for pets in the primary grades through the high school or college courses in health, biology, citizenship, home economics, physical education, or literature. The health examination in some schools makes an excellent contribution to sex education. Some high schools teach a great deal about family life and child care through courses which prepare both boys and girls to be efficient baby sitters. Teachers of literature know that fiction may be the means of helping young people to understand themselves, or their relations with the other sex, or with their family. The American Council on Education publishes a volume, "Reading Ladders for Human Relations"* which suggests ways of using many books of fiction to learn about patterns of family life, about how it feels to grow up, about belonging to groups, and other aspects of human relations.

The pamphlet in this series, "A Story About You," for boys and girls from about 9 to 12 years, is intended first of all to be used in homes where parents either read it with their children or give it to the children to read themselves when they are ready for it. In either case, it is hoped that parents and children will talk about it together.

If parents and teachers agree upon it, "A Story About You" can also be used at school with the more mature children of the 9-to-12 group. The parents and teachers should first read the pamphlet themselves, plan together how to use it and how to prepare the children for its use in the school group. Since growth is the theme of the pamphlet, it might be related to the program of weighing and measuring the boys and girls, or it might follow the school health examinations.

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*"Reading Ladders for Human Relations," edited by Muriel E. Crosby, American Council on Education, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington, D.C., 4th edition, 1963.

Sufficient time should be allowed in the school program so that the children are not hurried through the technical information and can absorb it readily. Ideally, the parents should have a copy of the pamphlet at home for reference in talking with their children about the topics discussed in it.

Similar cooperative planning is advisable when schools make use of the pamphlets in this series, "Finding Yourself," for the 12-to-15 year group, and "Approaching Adulthood" for young people from about 16 to 21 years.

A Few Suggestions for Youth Agencies

Many youth agencies and churches have realized that they have a great opportunity to help young people develop a better understanding of love, of relations between the sexes, and of family life. Sometimes this is done through helping individuals, as when a pastor counsels with a young couple about to be married. Often the help may be given through study or discussion groups about personal problems or family life.

In arranging sex education programs, youth leaders should remember that it is important for the parents of the young people in a group to have confidence in the agency's program and to be informed about it. This is especially true for programs with children or young teen-agers and is desirable with older youth, although they have more independence in setting up their own activities.

In many circumstances, it is desirable for youth leaders and parents to work together in planning the program. Some agencies have programs which give special emphasis to the participation of fathers or mothers in cooperation with club leaders, camp counselors, or other youth leaders.

It is important, too, that the young people themselves should have a chance to help plan the programs and to express their own wishes about it. Often they need some suggestions from the group leader about ideas or resources to which they can respond. For example, "There is a new film on marriage that you might like to see," or "There is a new film on how one can make up his own mind on difficult decisions," or "There is a new recording on marriage we could play on our phonograph."

Or a leading question may open a discussion, perhaps about relationships with parents, as "Are there things you wish your parents wouldn't do?" Or about friends—"How do you think you should

act, in order to keep the friends you make?" Or about dating—"How many of your friends seem to have as many dates as they want?" From the initial response to some such question, the group may decide to plan a program with the leaders' help in which they can get reliable information and can discuss their own personal problems. In such groups questions about sex conduct, petting, and premarital relations are often raised. If an outside speaker is to be brought in, it is well to select one who is known to the agency. Many other suggestions have been made throughout this pamphlet about the ways in which youth leaders can contribute to sex education.

The group also may decide how it wants the program to be organized. For example, should the group include both sexes? How do they want to ask their questions—on slips of paper or orally? Would the program be better as part of a week-end camp setting?

Youth leaders who work with boys and girls in the first half of the teens may want to use the pamphlet in this series called "Finding Yourself" as the basis for a group discussion about personal problems, such as physical changes that come with growing up, or about boy-girl friendships and dating, or about other aspects of sex education covered in that pamphlet. Leaders who work with older youth may want to use another pamphlet of this series, "Approaching Adulthood," as the basis for a marriage education course, including the ethical basis for making decisions about sex, facts about reproduction, about courtship, engagement and marriage. Still another pamphlet in this series, "Parents Responsibility," may be the basis for a discussion group with young parents who wish to learn how to guide the sex education of young children.

A Cooperative Task

There is need for the cooperation of many groups in a community if its atmosphere is to be favorable for the sex education and healthy sexual development of its children. First of all, do parents do all they can to carry their responsibilities? And do the parents of the community receive help from whatever appropriate agencies are available in a locality? Do parents have the help they need from schools and churches? Are the recreational facilities adequate? Do the courts and the police have specially trained persons to work with children and youth, such as psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists? Does a community film council report on motion pic-

tures in terms of their values for children and young people? Is a representative community group alert to the situation about pornographic publications, and is there a program of education in the community to help parents deal with the problem? Does the health department have an active program of health education and an adequate program for the control of venereal diseases? Is prostitution a problem, and what is being done about it? Is there an adult education program, and does it offer young parents the chance to study child development and to learn how to guide the sex education of their children? Are there marriage counseling facilities in the community? Guidance facilities for children and youth who are emotionally disturbed? Is there a local health council, and is it interested in sex education?

The increasing number of voluntary agencies and of county, state, or federal agencies concerned with health, education, and social welfare, along with the extension programs of universities gradually are bringing such services to many communities, both urban and rural, which formerly did not have them. But in both city and country, citizens may need to learn how to make more effective use of available facilities through better teamwork.

In the preceding lengthy but incomplete list of community factors that may be important in a child's experiences with sex, there is room for the efforts of every adult who hopes that young people may grow up in happy families, establishing in turn their own families based on the firm love of parents for each other and their children.

FOR ADDITIONAL READING

PAMPHLETS:

Other pamphlets in this series will be of interest to many parents, teachers, or other adult leaders of children and youth groups.

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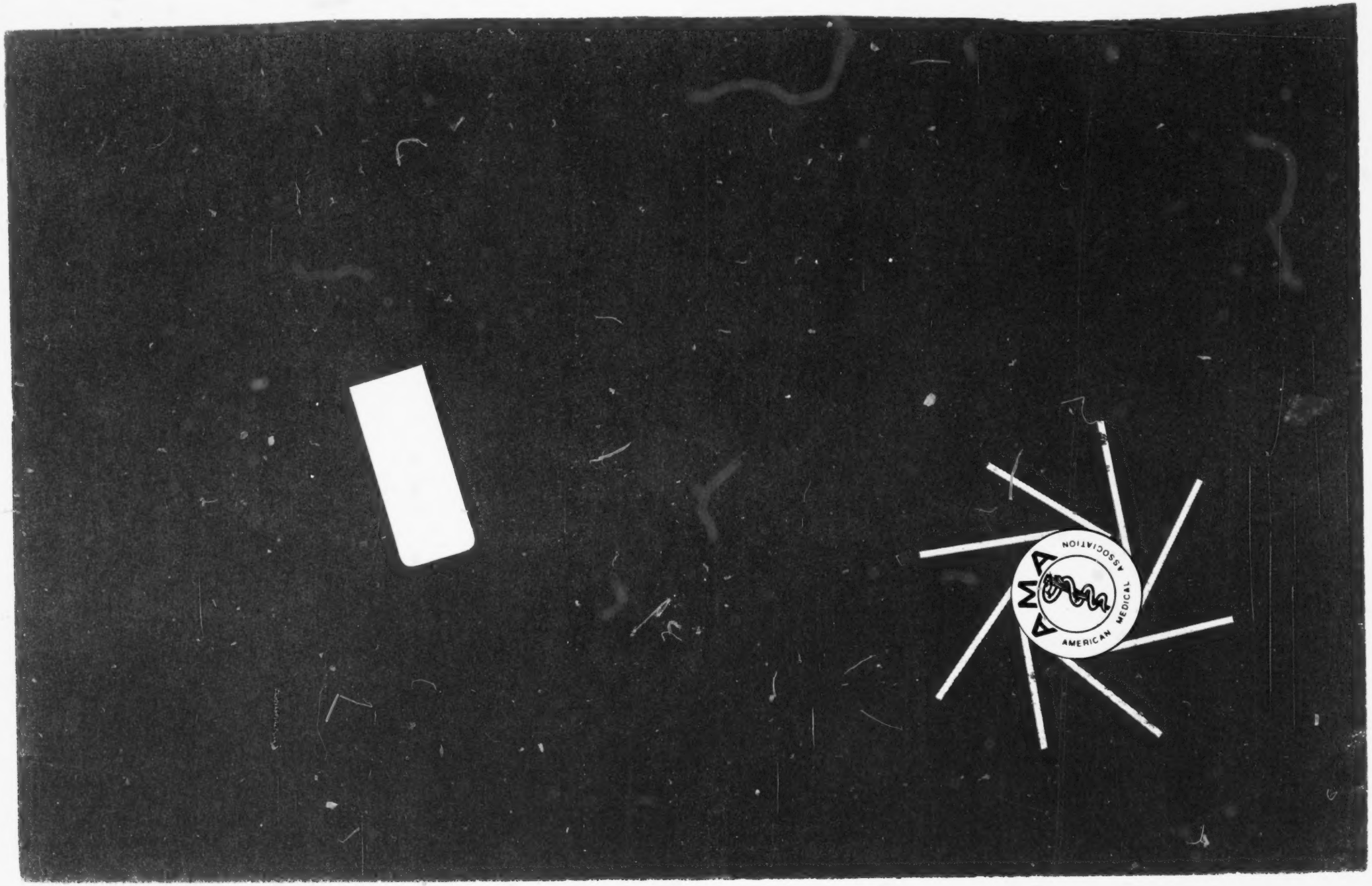
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